Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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FBIS-NES-95-100 *24 May 1995*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

League Chief Notes 'Israeli Plot' for Jerusalem

NC2305115195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1010 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 23 May (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has emphasized Jerusalem's current importance to the continuation of the peace efforts and the need to implement UN resolutions stipulating that the city's historical, cultural, and population status not be changed.

In an interview with the Kuwaiti magazine AL-YAQAZAH, to be published Friday [26 May], he called on the Arab and Islamic countries to confront the imminent Israeli plot concerning Jerusalem. He said that during next year's celebrations marking 3,000 years since the Jewish kingdom was established, Israel intends to impart a legal, political, and promotional status to the massive changes to the holy city's character.

He stressed the importance for a comprehensive and just peace in the region to be based on addressing the political issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue before contemplating or beginning to establish economic ties with Israel. [passage omitted]

He noted that peace with Israel will not result in any economic privileges for the Arab countries and that these countries will be dealt with according to criteria and controls devised by each Arab country in line with its national interests. [passage omitted]

'Abd-al-Majid expressed his hope that this year will see the desired Arab reconciliation, especially after Iraq's documented recognition of Kuwait and its borders as drawn by the UN committee. At the same time, he asked Iraq to continue implementing the remaining Security Council resolutions concerning the Gulf crisis, especially on the Kuwaiti detainees and missing people.

League Official on Scheme To 'Judaize' Jerusalem

NC2305172595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1656 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 23 May (MENA)—Ambassador Sa'id Kamal, Arab League assistant secretary general, asserted today that although Israel has frozen its decision to confiscate 53 hectares of land in East Jerusalem, the scheme to Judaize Jerusalem and confiscate more Arab land continues.

Kamal reported that Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid had instructed him to follow up this Israeli scheme. Kamal noted that the Arab League Council's meeting on Jerusalem is still technically open and the possibility of holding an Arab minisummit still exists in view of the continuing Israeli designs on the city.

Kamal said Jerusalem is at the core of the political settlement and is a red line that Arab and Islamic governments will not allow to be crossed. He said the Arab League is willing to host any conference of the cordon states to restore coordination among the Arab delegations negotiating with Israel.

Summit Said Not Canceled Until 'Things Clear Up'

NC2305182595 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ambassador Ahmad Bin-Hilli, director of the Arab Desk at the Arab League, has announced that the decision to suspend the Arab summit does not mean canceling it completely. He said the Arab League is waiting for things to clear up and see what Israel will do about implementing UN resolutions on Jerusalem.

Bin-Hilli pointed out that the Arab League does not trust Israel, particularly as it does not abide by UN resolutions.

He added that the Arab League will continue its efforts to create propitious circumstances to hold Arab meetings. He said he hopes these meetings will be crowned by an expanded Arab summit in view of the direct threat to pan-Arab security.

U.S. Pressures Said Behind Suspension of Arab Summit

JN2405094195 Baghdad INA in English 0810 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, May 24, INA—Well-informed diplomatic sources here said on Tuesday [23 May] that U.S. pressures were built on some Arab countries that were expected to take part in the mini Arab summit for suspending it.

INA learnt that Washington demanded Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates not to participate in the mini-summit or to agree to its resolutions.

Egypt was also not enthusiastic to hold the summit, the sources said, adding that the postponement of this summit was not because of Israel decision to suspend the confiscation of Arab land in al-Quds [Jerusalem] but because of substantial differences among the Arab states invited to take part in this summit in addition to the disagreement on the items on the agenda and the level of representation.

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Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 9 May

NC1605171795

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 9 May edition of the Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Muslims Urged To Help Their Brothers Abroad

2. Mufti Says Religions Proscribe 'Terrorism'
3. Scholar's Book Banned in France
4. Report Condemns French Ban on Scholar's Book
5. Columnist Mocks French Slogans on Freedom of Opinion
6. Chief Editor on Paper's Role in Confronting 'Terrorism'

MUSLIMS URGED TO HELP THEIR BROTHERS ABROAD

In his column on page 1, the paper's chairman of the board Samir Rajab writes on the religious significance of the al-Adha feast and says that this feast has turned into a food and entertainment festival with the passage of time and that rich and affluent Muslims have turned their back on their brothers, as shown by the plight of Muslims in Chechnya, Bosnia, India, and elsewhere. He adds that this feast is the right time for Muslims to get together "to save their kinsmen and relatives from the imminent danger and not to clap and shout at the sight of sheep being slaughtered."

MUFTI SAYS RELIGIONS PROSCRIBE 'TERRORISM'

A 500-word report on page 3 by Mahmud 'Ashab details a meeting between Mufti Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi and a students delegation from eight U.S. universities. The mufti answers questions on the role and duties of the mufti office and on Islam's rulings on crime. To a further question on extremism and terrorism and how to confront them, the mufti replies: "I explain in my various meetings in all Egypt's governorates and abroad that the divine religions proscribe destruction, extremism, killing, and terrorism. I explain that the Islamic shari'ah defends and protects people's honor and possessions. I also explain that Egypt welcomes any tourist who comes and open its arms to him as long as he respects its laws, values, and traditions and as long as he does not do something that harms its people. We as Egyptians are religiously responsible for protecting him, his dignity, possessions, and honor. Islamic shari'ah urges us to do this."

SCHOLAR'S BOOK BANNED IN FRANCE

A 1,800-word article by Basyuni al-Halawani on page 8 reviews the book of "What is Permissible and Impermissible in Islam" by scholar Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, which France banned. The book was first published more than 30 years ago and had been on sale in France for more than 15 years.

REPORT CONDEMNS FRENCH BAN ON SCHOLAR'S BOOK

In a related story on the same page, an unidentified reporter says that Islamic centers in Europe and the United States condemned the French decision to ban Dr. al-Qaradawi's book and that the copies on sale in Egypt were snapped up by buyers when the decision became known. The report also cites an interview Dr. al-Qaradawi gave to the BBC in which he said he was surprised by the French decision and added that the book bears no hostility toward the West but calls for having good relations with Christians. He then challenges the French interior minister to "show any part of the book that leads to general chaos or is hostile to non-Muslims. This is an onslaught on Islam itself and not the book."

COLUMNIST MOCKS FRENCH SLOGANS ON FREEDOM OF OPINION

In his 400-word "God is Benevolent" column on page 8, Majdi Salim also comments on the French decision and compares it to the welcome accorded Salman Rushdie, who was allowed to propagate his anti-Islamic books. Mocking the French claim of protecting the freedom of opinion, the writer says that this decision "proves once again that the West's slogans on freedom of opinion and belief are only a means or a cover for harming Islam." He adds that the truth about the West and its so-called civilization and freedom should be exposed to those "who are presenting us with the West as an example that we have to follow because it is at the vanguard of freedom of opinion and belief."

CHIEF EDITOR ON PAPER'S ROLE IN CONFRONTING 'TERRORISM'

An 1,800-word report on page 14 details the forum held by the 'AQIDATI convoy for students of the College of Qualitative Education in Damietta. The forum was devoted to a discussion of religion and science with the speakers quoting from the Koran to show that science does not conflict with Islam but is encouraged by the shari'ah. The students then ask several questions on Islam's rulings on divorce, the duty of the student to be an example for others by being a good and practicing Muslim, the conditions for translating the Koran into other languages, and the pilgrimage rites. A question

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about 'AQIDATI's role in confronting terrorism is answered by the paper's chief editor al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf. He says: "Terrorism is one of the means used to weaken Egypt and the Islamic nation and 'AQIDATI's role is the one that we must all undertake, each one in his position." He then adds: "We in 'AQIDATI are spreading the right intellectual and religious awareness and are fighting religious illiteracy and extremism. We are also fighting religious bigotry. We are publishing the correct religious culture and lying in wait for those who are hostile to religion. We are at the same time looking at the opportunities to solve the problems facing the youths, such as providing job opportunities."

To another question on the reasons why young people tend to lean toward extremism, Dr. 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Abu-al-Sa'd, dean of the Arabic Language Department, says that "Extremist groups throughout the history of Islam have been mentally and ideologically weak and have never been psychologically or mentally stable. They have been groups that have embraced hysteria or psychological and mental sickness. Therefore, let us agree that all extremist groups in the world are psychologically and mentally sick. This means that we did this extremist an injustice. Psychological sickness reflects economic, educational, and political worry and therefore this worry breeds unstable youths."

OIC Condemns Desecration of Charar Sharif Shrine

LD1705170995 Tehran IRNA in English 1340 GMT 17 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 17, IRNA — The contact group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on Jammu and Kashmir strongly condemned Indian military operation against the peaceful residents of Charar Sharif, IRNA correspondent at the United Nations said today.

The OIC contact group on Jammu and Kashmir held a meeting at the United Nations in New York. The statement issued at the end of the meeting regretted that the concern and alarm at the siege of the shrine expressed earlier and the OIC secretary general's appeals to lift the siege were not heeded by the Indian Government.

It expressed its deep anxiety that some Indian leaders after the desecration of the mosque and shrine by Indian armed personnel had threatened use of force against Azad Kashmir. The contact group deplored that the desecration of the holy places of Muslims in [word indistinct] had become a pattern over the years. It recalled that earlier in 1992, the Babri mosque at Ayodhya was demolished and destroyed by the Hindu fanatics.

The contact group noted that the desecration of Charar Sharif mosque and the shrine had led to massive peaceful demonstrations throughout Jammu and Kashmir and that the Indian authorities have imposed curfew in Srinagar and several other towns in an effort to prevent the expression of protest against this latest assault on the religious sentiments of the Kashmiri people.

IRNA correspondent qouted the statement as saying, "The members of the contact group urged the Indian Government to withdraw their forces from Charar Sharif and take other immediate steps to mitigate the effects of the desecration of the mosque and the shrine."

The contact group, reaffirming the OIC resolution on Jammu and Kashmir adopted at the seventh Islamic summit held in Casablanca expressed total solidarity with with the Kashmiri people.

It urged the United Nations secretary general to take due cognizance of the threat to the regional peace and security posed by deteriorating situation in Kashmir, particularly by the desecration and destruction of the Charar Sharif mosque and shrine. It also appealed to the president of the Security Council to take note of the situation and to bring the matter to the attention of members of the Security Council for appropriate action.

Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Guide al-Malat Dies

NC2205125595 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 16 May 95 pp 1, 6

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Ahmad al-Malat, Muslim Brotherhood deputy general guide and chairman of the Islamic Medical Association, died at age 79 after completing the rites of pilgrimage. In line with his will, he was buried in al-Baqi' Cemetery in Medina.

Dr. al-Malat—a surgeon by training—was born in al-Qattawiyah in al-Sharqiyah Governorate's Abu Hammad District. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood while a secondary school student. After graduating from medical school, he led the Muslim Brotherhood's medical mission during the 1948 Palestine war.

Dr. al-Malat was detained several times but this did not deter him from defending the principles in which he believed.

He visited the Palestinian deportees during their stay in Marj al-Zuhur [in south Lebanon]. He also made many visits and tours of Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the United States, Europe, and Far Eastern countries.

He spoke out and wrote in defense of Islamic causes, notably the Palestinian cause.

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He leaves his wife; two sons, Usamah, a surgeon, and Muhammad, an optician; and two daughters, a physician and a political science graduate.

Palestinian Affairs

Assassination Attempt on 'Arafat Said Foiled

Explosive Charge Found in Office

TA2305173995 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 23 May 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] An Israeli source revealed this evening that an explosive charge was found and safely dismantled in Yasir 'Arafat's office several days ago.

The source said that this was a first-of-its-kind assassination attempt by the rejectionist organizations and carried out against the backdrop of Yasir 'Arafat's struggle against terrorism in the Gaza Strip.

PA Sources Deny Assassination Bid

TA2405061895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Was there an attempt to assassinate Yasir 'Arafat or not? Israeli sources say that 'Arafat's bodyguards defused a bomb set to kill him, while senior Palestinian Authority [PA] sources officially deny the report. Palestinian security sources nevertheless asserted that the bomb was planted by members of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. Yoni Ben-Menahem reports:

[Ben-Menahem] Israeli sources reported that a bomb parcel was found a few days ago in Yasir 'Arafat's office and defused by his bodyguards. Israeli sources believe that the attempt to assassinate 'Arafat is related to his crackdown on terror.

PA sources were surprised at the publication of the report in Israel. Senior PA sources officially denied the report in talks with foreign and Israeli journalists, while Palestinian security sources unofficially confirmed it. According to the latter, the bomb was planted near 'Arafat's office by members of Hamas. The same sources told us that this is not the first time that Islamic radicals in the Gaza Strip have attempted to assassinate 'Arafat. [passage omitted]

PA Minister Claims Israel Behind Reports

TA2405105195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A Palestinian Authority [PA] minister has accused Israel of trying to sow confusion in the Palestinian street by spreading reports about an attempt to assassinate Yasir 'Arafat. Dr. 'Azmi al-Shu'aybi, the PA's minister in charge of the youth and sports portfolio, told our correspondent that there had been no attempt whatsoever to assassinate 'Arafat. According to him, contacts continue among the Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip in a bid to arrive at a national consensus.

'Abbas on Lessons of Israel Jerusalem 'Climbdown'

MM2405112795 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 24 May 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Abu-Mazin Tells AL-HAYAH: Rabin's Climbdown Revealed Fragility Of Israeli Equation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, AL-HAYAH — PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin) has said that the Israeli Government's suspension of its decision to confiscate Arab lands in Jerusalem confirms the importance of Arab coordination vis-a-vis tackling crucial and major issues.

Abu-Mazin, who is visiting Moscow to hold talks with Russian officials, said that "the confiscation decision raised big question marks over the entire normalization process in the region. And it was a test for the credibility of regional and international parties." He pointed out that the U.S. sponsor vetoed the Security Council resolution despite the international unanimity over the need to stop the confiscation — "which revealed that he is biased toward a party to the dispute, not neutral."

Abu-Mazin welcomed the Arab position, saying that "it came after years of disagreement. It proved that there are potential energies which the Arabs can employ. It also proved that there are important common denominators among the Arab countries."

He said that the Israeli Government's climbdown under internal pressures reveals that "the Israeli political equation is fragile and can be influenced by parties that used to be considered marginal or very weak according to Israeli standards."

PNC's al-Za'nun on Israel's 'New Offer' on Sovereignty

MM2305111295 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 May 95 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Salim al-Za'nun Tells AL-SHARQ AL- AWSAT: Israel Offered Palestinians a State in Parts of Negev and Sinai"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Israel has made a new offer regarding the

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establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian state in Gaza, extending its borders in the direction of the Negev desert and a part of Sinai on the basis of a previous promise made by the late Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat, but the dialogue between Fatah and Hamas has stopped.

That was revealed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday by Salim al- Za'nun, acting speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC]. He added that in return, Israel wanted the West Bank ceded [by the Palestinians] with the issue of sovereignty over it postponed for 20 to 25 years.

He said that the Israelis repeated that on more than one occasion. He stressed that the Israeli offer was a result of Israel's internal problems and its inability to deal with the problem of 120 settlements.

In reply to a question about the Israeli leaders' reported revival of the Jordanian option (religious trusteeship) on Jerusalem, al-Za'nun said that the recent dispute over the issue of Jerusalem was resolved at the latest meeting between King Husayn of Jordan and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

He said that Israel was behind that dispute and when it failed it proceeded to implement its plans to seize East Jerusalem. He added that the Israeli leaders talk about the "Jordanian option" only to foment disputes between Jordan and the Palestinians.

On the legislative elections, al-Za'nun said: I believe that the talks between the Palestinians and Israelis on the elections is like a dialogue of the deaf. Israel wants to show the world that its disagreement with the Palestinians is over democratic methods but the truth is that it does not want to withdraw from populated areas and does not want to redeploy.

On the question of the dialogue between Fatah and Hamas, al- Za'nun said: The dialogue has stopped but there are attempts to revive it. I was supposed to go to Gaza at the head of a team to start the dialogue but health reasons prevented that.

On the possibility of the PNC members and offices returning [to the autonomy areas], al-Za'nun said: I have told 'Arafat that I refuse to go there and that I will remain in Jordan until the establishment of a Palestinian independent state because I do not want to be an instrument in the Israelis' hands. I believe that the present PNC is the last one. It will remain until we can have a democratically elected national council.

Asked why the PNC has not met so far, al-Za'nun said: We realize the importance of PNC meetings in the current circumstances but, regrettably, the Arab states have not been willing to host them. Algeria had agreed to allow the PNC to hold its meetings on its territory but the internal situation there precludes that.

Hamas Official Views Land Seizure Suspension

NC2305192995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1745 GMT 23 May 95

[Telephone interview with Mustafa al-Liddawi, the Beirut representative of the Islamic Resistance Movement, in Beirut, by unidentified correspondent, in Tehran; date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] How do you view the Zionist government's decision to suspend the confiscation of land?

[Al-Liddawi] First, the whole world, the Palestinians, and the Muslims must understand that the Israeli Government has not suspended its decision to confiscate and swallow up Palestinian land. Controlling Palestinian land, not only in Jerusalem, but also in all Arab regions, is an entrenched Israeli policy in the history of the Zionist entity. We do not believe that the Zionist entity has suspended this decision. But for some reasons the Zionist enemy found that the circumstances are not right. As it claims, it is engaged in a peace process and it has hopes of broad normalization with the Arab and Islamic world. Such normalization is never compatible with the confiscation of land. So we believe that the Israelis only wanted to circumvent their intentions at this stage. They will never stop confiscating land and they will continue to swallow up Palestinian territory in East Jerusalem and in the West Bank. They are only looking for the right opportunities. Rabin has recently been feeling that his government may be shaken or may lose the confidence of some left-wing and Arab parties in the government coalition. Rabin, who firmly believes the settlement policy must continue, perhaps feels that his government will fall if he continues the usurpation of land.

We must not forget that the world community, apart from the United States, was this time almost unanimous against the Zionist policy. The Zionist entity perhaps felt that it had to retract. It was looking for a way out of this crisis, not to stop its confiscation of land, but to wait for better chances.

[Correspondent] Do you think the postponement of the Arab minisummit was the right thing to do?

[Al-Liddawi] It was not right. Irrespective of the confiscation of Arab land in East Jerusalem, we need Arab solidarity. The Arabs need to meet to discuss their future

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and to study the Arab situation amid the Israeli offensive called peace. Irrespective of whether these Arab regimes are faithful to the Palestinian cause, we believe that the summit could perhaps have produced something positive. We do not think that canceling the summit was a positive measure.

But we do not believe a retreat by the Israelis led to the failure to hold the summit. We do not believe the Israelis have retreated. The Arabs did not meet because they did not agree on the form of the meeting. The Moroccan king wanted the presidents and kings of the 10 countries invited to the summit to personally attend. Some Arab countries refused to participate on the level of presidents or kings. The Zionist enemy's step gave a chance to some Arab leaders to go back on the plan to hold the summit.

If you allow me to return to the suspension of the Israeli decision on the confiscation of Palestinian land in Jerusalem, we believe one of the reasons for this is Israel's strong concern for 'Arafat. 'Arafat cannot continue to deceive the people, who see that the Israelis are swallowing up the land daily. Rabin wanted to save his friend 'Arafat, and 'Arafat also tried to save Rabin when he told the Arab Knesset members not to vote to withhold confidence in the Israeli Government. So we believe the Israeli position was this time designed to save 'Arafat's face, which withered with the daily oppressive Zionist practices.

Al-Husayni: All East Jerusalem Belongs to Palestinians

TA2405105495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni has sharply criticized the peace flight conducted yesterday by Jordanian and Israeli airplanes, saying that Israel tried to create the impression that Jerusalem is its capital. Interviewed by our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem, al-Husayni said that 'Atarot Airport belongs to the Palestinians, just as all of East Jerusalem belongs to them.

Earlier today al-Husayni conferred in Orient House with foreign diplomats accredited to Israel and updated them about the developments in the peace process and the PLO's position on Jerusalem. [Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0900 GMT on 24 May adds that "the diplomats included a representative of the Jordanian Embassy. Al-Husayni told his guests that a resumption of the land confiscations would be regarded by the Palestinians as crossing a red line."]

PLO's Qaddumi Meets Opposition; Hawatimah Comments

JN2305150295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] PLO Political Department Head Faruq Qaddumi pursues his efforts to establish what he calls a positive opposition to the Oslo agreement.

Qaddumi held talks with Syrian officials and leaders of the Palestinian factions which oppose the peace process in Damascus yesterday. He called for suspending the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and normalization with Israel.

A meeting is under way at the office of Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in Damascus. The Palestinian opposition factions, Fathi al-Shaqaqi, secretary general of the Islamic Jihad Movement, a Hamas representative, and Bassam al-Shak'ah, secretary of the Palestinian Grouping, attend the meeting. The conferees seek to enhance the work of the opposition in and outside the occupied territories.

Hawatimah said at the meeting that the freezing of the Israeli land confiscation decision is a maneuver to contain Arab and Islamic mobilization and international protests, and that the decision to postpone the Arab summit which followed it is an Arab setback and a failure of the recent attempts to unite Arab ranks.

Islamic Jihad Figures View PA, 'Arafat, Peace

Shaykh Nafidh 'Azzam on PA

TA2305181295 Gaza AL-ISTIQLAL in Arabic 19 May 95 p 6

[Interview with Shaykh Nafidh 'Azzam, a "prominent" Islamic Jihad figure, by Hasan Duhan; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Duhan] Following the release of Shaykh al-Shami from prison, an immense media uproar was raised about his statements and that he was freed within framework of an agreement between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Islamic Jihad. How do you interpret this?

['Azzam] This uproar is absolutely not justified. Shaykh al- Shami's release came about as the natural result of the fact that no charge was proved against him. Not only that, there was no justification to detain Shaykh al-Shami from the outset. His release was not based on a deal or as part of an agreement. Therefore, we believe that there is no justification for this uproar. The release

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was a natural thing and is not an indication of any other reasons.

As for the personal statements made by Shaykh al-Shami, first of all part of them were an expression of his own private opinions. Second, we believe that news agencies interpreted those statements erroneously and exaggerated their importance. Shaykh al-Shami issued a statement in which he explained his real stance, which is not different at all from Islamic Jihad's known positions. We wish to stress here that there is absolutely no disagreement within the movement's circles over any strategic or fundamental issue. There is always total adherence by all bases and cadres to a single stance.

[Duhan] Do you think it is possible to reach agreement with the PA?

['Azzam] We believe that this agreement is distant at present. There are large obstacles to achieving such an agreement. There are still problems. The issue of the detainees has not been resolved, the verdicts issued by the State Security Court are still in effect, and the ban on weapons remains. Therefore, there are problems, all of which concern the PA. Hence, we believe that an agreement is still far off.

[Duhan] Agreement between the opposition and the PA can remove the specter of a civil war from the Palestinian arena. What is your opinion on this?

['Azzam] The chance of a civil war breaking out in Palestinian society is very slim. Palestinian society is cohesive and closely knit. At one home we might find someone affiliated with Islamic Jihad, another with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and another with Fatah. This greatly decreases the chance of a civil war. There is another important matter, namely, we are trying our utmost to avoid conflict and escalation. We are exercising self- restraint all the time and realize that there are many complications. However, we act on the basis of full evaluation of this people's interest. Infighting cannot serve this interest and is not beneficial to any party except the Zionists who wish us evil.

[Duhan] Suppose an escalation occurs between the Islamists and the PA that could lead to infighting. Do you believe that it is possible to change part of Islamic Jihad's practical strategy?

['Azzam] It is absolutely not possible for infighting to take place as a result of the continuation of jihad and resistance. Continuation of jihad cannot lead to civil war, because all the people feel that jihad is an embodiment of them and defends their rights. As for talk about the movement backing down from its constants, this is impossible. The movement will not survive except by preserving its constants and principles. Islamic Jihad did not gain this credibility among the Palestinian people, the Arab and Islamic nations, and the entire world except by sticking to its positions. Therefore, there cannot be any backing down from fundamental and basic positions.

[Duhan] A year after the signing of the Oslo accords and the PA's arrival in the self-rule areas, how do you assess its political and civilian performance?

['Azzam] The warnings that we made after the signing of the accords have now become clear to everyone. We said that the accords will have destructive effects on the Palestinians and the Arab and Islamic worlds. We said that the accords will not solve the problems of the Palestinians and will not ease their suffering. This is what everyone is clearly observing. We said that the accords will reinforce the state of hostility in Palestine and will allow the Zionist entity to extend further and enter Arab and Islamic capitals. We said that the accords will sow the seeds of discord among the Palestinian people. Some indications of this discord have appeared despite serious attempts to reduce its dangers. We said that the accords give a legitimacy to the Zionist entity that none of its statesmen dreamed of over 50 years. This deprives us of a great deal of respect before the world. After one year, we can claim that the negative aspects of the accords are becoming clearer. The Zionist entity's haughtiness is growing and Palestinian suffering is increasing. Clearly, a state of anarchy prevails in most aspects of daily life. There is an obvious retreat in services and the economy is suffering from immense ailments. The link with the Zionist economy makes us pay all the time. The siege is imposed with or without reason. There are no clear plans and specific programs to enhance the infrastructure and ease the people's suffering. There is no clear perception of what we want tomorrow or after tomorrow. Therefore, we believe that no one objects when we say that the situation is getting worse one year after the PA's presence in the Gaza Strip.

[Duhan] What alternatives do you propose to come out of the current impasse?

['Azzam] Certainly, continuing with the option of jihad and resistance is the best solution and the only way to emerge from this ordeal. The Palestinian people's problems can in no way be solved against the background of the Oslo accords. Palestinian suffering cannot end through the donors' money or the Zionist entity's grants. The only way out is to return to our principles and continue on the path of struggle, jihad, and resistance which preserves our religion and homeland and gives us the chance to defend the dignity of the entire nation.

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[Duhan] How do you view the Israeli Government's ratification of the decision to expropriate lands in Jerusalem?

['Azzam] This decision did not take us by surprise. It was expected and even worse than that. In light of the state of accommodation in the region, the feverish competition by Arab regimes to sign agreements and deals with the Zionist entity, and the fervent attempts of governments to appease the United States, it is natural for the Zionists to confiscate land in Jerusalem and land belonging to Palestinians everywhere. It is natural that they expand settlement building and that the United States thinks about transferring its embassy to Jerusalem. All this proves that we are living in the era of war, not peace. They are continuing their war against us and against Muslims. Consequently, none of their conduct should be surprising. The Zionist government's decision clearly proves that they deal with the opposite parties with arrogance and contempt. This cannot be stopped by campaigns of condemnation, Security Council resolutions, or the compensation proposed by the United States UN delegate.

[Duhan] If the PA confiscates the weapons of the opposition Islamic movement, what will be Islamic Jihad's reaction?

['Azzam] That is unlikely. The weapons of Hamas and Islamic Jihad are not exhibited in markets or streets. We believe that if the PA becomes aware of the presence of weapons in a certain place, it will confiscate them. Therefore, once more we rule out any problem in this respect. Weapons in the hands of mujahidin are something legitimate. It is a guarantee in the face of dangers posed by Zionist soldiers and settlers. We believe that the PA is duty bound to understand this. The mujahidin's weapons are not used except to defend this people and regain its right.

Al-Shaqaqi on Talks With 'Arafat, Accord

JN2305193995 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 22 May 95 p 4

[Interview with Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, secretary general of the Islamic Jihad Movement, by correspondent 'Abd-al-Hadi al-Nashshash in Damascus; date not given — first two paragraphs are AL-MAJD introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, secretary general of the Islamic Jihad Movement, has disclosed information that is published for the first time on the details of the dialogue between the Islamic Jihad Movement and the Palestinian self-rule authority. Al-Shaqaqi's statements come in the wake of statements by Gaza Hamas [Islamic Movement] leader Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Shami which triggered heated arguments within the Palestinian opposition. Observers viewed these statements as a change in the stands and policies of the Islamic Jihad Movement which incessantly proclaims in words and deeds its opposition to the Oslo agreement and to its manifestations on more than one level.

Al-Shaqaqi told AL-MAJD that the Oslo agreement has become a fact on the ground which some parties try to impose and to legalize while we try to oppose and cancel it. He adds that there is a sizable part of the Palestinian opposition which is not so serious in its opposition to peace with the enemy. This part of the opposition works to render the fait accompli acceptable and tries to improve it as much as possible. Perhaps, those who adopt this line have a political and ideological background that does not completely conflict with the peace (capitulation) option. In times of frustration, many give up when faced with the facts on the ground. As for us, we cannot imagine the possibility of our dealing with the Oslo agreement as a reality. We are convinced that the agreement will collapse without any military battle. However, military blows expedite this collapse.

[Al-Nashshash] How do you explain Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Shami's statements?

[Al-Shaqaqi] We in the Islamic Jihad do not ban any brother from saying what he believes. But, the movement and the command have the final say. Al-Shami's viewpoint might not be the first or the last. However, it should have been expressed within the movement and not through the media. In any case, what took place with respect to Shaykh al-Shami is that he had come out of prison unaware of what has been taking place during the months of his incarceration.

[Al-Nashshash] What happened during these months and what is the story of the dialogue between you and the self-rule authority?

[Al-Shaqaqi] Since 1988, the PLO, particularly Yasir 'Arafat, have been asking us to hold a dialogue. 'Arafat sent letters and held contacts asking us to hold a dialogue. This room witnessed several meetings to discuss this issue. I adopted a negative stand for several reasons:

1. I vehemently rejected Yasir 'Arafat's political course and the fate that awaited us as a result of this policy.

2. 'Arafat used to directly conspire against the Islamic Jihad Movement by fabricating fictitious organizations and officials.

3. Some people, particularly in 1987 and 1988, believed that the Islamic Jihad Movement was connected to the

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Fatah Movement and, most probably, to late Khalil al-Wazir. Since this is not true, we wanted to put an end to such talk by boycotting any dialogue. At the time, we were in contact with brothers Hamdi al-Tamimi and Abu-Hasan Qasim, two of the most important military leaders who were associated with Khalil al-Wazir. In the mid 80's, they started to have ideas similar to the Islamic Jihad's ideology. We then worked with them for one or two years before they were martyred in Cyprus. We must mention here that this coordination took place without the Fatah command's knowledge.

After the Palestinian Authority entered Gaza Strip, Yasir 'Arafat exerted great efforts to meet with the movement's leaders, and with me personally, anywhere abroad. The movement's leaders inside [the occupied territories] tried to avoid such a meeting for several reasons. But because of the wave of rumors that the Islamic Jihad received orders from abroad to assassinate 'Arafat, we permitted some movement leaders to meet 'Arafat personally. The meeting took place in Gaza at the beginning of 1995 and was attended by several Islamic Jihad leaders such as Shaykh Nafidh 'Azzam, Dr. Muhammad al- Nahdi, and Shaykh al-Shami. During the meeting, our brothers stressed the movement's political principles, including their rejection of the Oslo agreement. This made 'Arafat assert that the Oslo agreement "was the worst."

At the meeting, 'Arafat's advisers asked for a halt to "the military action," but the brothers refused even to talk about it.

[Al-Nashshash] What about the recent rounds of dialogue?

[Al-Shaqaqi] Following Hamas' operations and the movement's operation in Kefar Darom, 'Arafat launched a violent campaign against the Islamic movement, and we had different views on how to face the campaign. A Jihad movement member said: "Let us either hold a dialogue with the authority or start an internecine fighting." As the latter was unacceptable, we decided to hold a dialogue only if prisoners are released, sentences are revoked, the State Security Council is canceled, and the decision to disarm the mujahidin is rescinded.

The authority, in return, set the condition of halting the armed action for a while. Therefore, some brothers talked about a temporary halt to operations in Gaza because we believed that the authority would not agree to the movement's conditions. But the authority, which has a huge media machine, began to talk about an imminent agreement, although the issue was still under discussion.

[Al-Nashshash] How did you face this problem?

[Al-Shaqaqi] Due to this propaganda campaign, we had to stop the dialogue and to stress our principles anew, foremost of which is armed struggle everywhere in Palestine. Since that dialogue which began on 19 April, we have not held any dialogue because the authority uses dialogue to cast doubt on our positions. Yet, we have no objection to discussing procedural issues on the ground in order to prevent internecine clash.

[Al-Nashshash] Was there a dialogue with Hamas too?

[Al-Shaqaqi] Yes, there was a dialogue between Hamas and the Authority, but without Hamas relinquishing any of its principles.

[Al-Nashshash] Have you decided to resume the dialogue?

[Al-Shaqaqi] We do not forbid dialogue, and we are for any effort to prevent internecine fighting. But we refuse to bargain on our position toward the Oslo agreement or to recognize the self-rule authority in light of that agreement.

Jericho VOP Previews 'Arafat's Visit to Jordan

JN2305114595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat will leave for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan today. He will hold talks with His Majesty King Husayn on the latest political developments, especially the question of expropriating Palestinian land in occupied Jerusalem. 'Arafat will confer with 80 businessmen and discuss with them the possibility of establishing projects in the Palestinian territory to develop the national economy. We have on the line from Amman Fathi al-Barqawi who will tell us of the president's visit to Jordan:

[Announcer 'Arif Salim] Hello, Fathi.

[Al-Barqawi] Hello, brother 'Arif.

[Salim] When will the president arrive?

[Al-Barqawi] He is expected to arrive at 1330 [1030 GMT], that is after 90 minutes. His private plane will touch down on the Royal tarmac at the Marka military airport near 'Amman.

[Salim] Who are the members of the official delegation?

[Al-Barqawi] According to official information, the delegation will be composed of Ahmad Quray', minister of economy and trade; Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, minister of culture; Muhammad Zuhdi al- Nashashibi, finance minister and acting agriculture minister; Marwan Kanafani, the

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president's media adviser; and Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, the president's adviser.

[Salim] Who will receive the president at the airport?

[Al-Barqawi] Of course there will be the Jordanian Monarch, King Husayn, Prime Minister Zayd bin-Shakir, and senior Jordanian officials, in addition to Palestinian officials and Palestinian cadres and popular figures.

[Salim] What will be 'Arafat's activities in Amman?

[Al-Barqawi] The Palestinian president will meet with King Husayn at a working luncheon today and will meet him again during an official dinner. He will hold official talks with a Jordanian delegation under Prime Minister Zayd Bin-Shakir. As you said a short while ago, he will be meeting with about 80 of the Jordanian-Palestinian economic figures. The Voice of Palestine has learned that economic figures from the Gaza Strip—from the Gaza chamber of commerce to be exact—will arrive in Amman today for this purpose. This delegation will be composed of Zuhayr 'Isa Murad, Mahmud al- Farra, Mustafa al-Ifranji, 'Abd-al-Sami' al-Ifranji, and Rabi Abu-Rayda.

[Salim] Thank you Fathi, hope to talk with you later.

[Al-Barqawi] Thank you.

PA To Issue New Weekly To Replace AL-AQSA

TA2305135995 Gaza AL-ISTIQLAL in Arabic 19 May 95 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Preparations are under way to publish a new newspaper affiliated with the Palestinian Authority [PA] called FILASTIN AL-JADIDAH [New Palestine]. This newspaper will replace AL-AQSA, which stopped publication about two weeks ago. Journalists who worked at AL-AQSA said that the new newspaper will be a weekly and that the majority of its editors will be among those who have returned from abroad.

Our correspondent reports that AL-AQSA used to publish 3,000 copies a day and that some members of the editorial team were replaced a short while before it ceased publication. This change included the editor in chief, who was replaced by Muhammad Sulayman, one time editor in chief of the Cyprus-based FILASTIN AL-THAWRAH magazine.

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Algeria

'Complete Cancellation' of Israeli Confiscation Urged

LD2305205395 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement on the Israeli Government's decision to confiscate Palestinian land in Jerusalem and the subsequent announcement to freeze this decision, the Foreign Affairs spokesman said that this showed, once more, that the policy of fait accompli was not serving the peace process in the Middle East.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry statement stressed that Algeria demanded the complete cancellation of the confiscation decision and reminded that Israel should submit to the commitments of international legitimacy — particularly to the principle of not seizing the land of others by force. It should also respect UN resolutions, including the Security Council's Resolution No. 478, which considered null any measure to change the character and appearance of Jerusalem.

At this exceptional phase in which the Arab nation should confront different kinds of challenges, Algeria calls for mobilizing and strengthening consultation between the Arab countries to preserve and defend their common interests.

The statement of the Foreign Affairs Ministry's spokesman believes that the postponement of the mini-Arab summit, scheduled to be held in Rabat, Morocco, was an opportunity to promote consultation and achieve the expected Arab rapprochement.

Government, Governors Coordinate on National Program

Prime Minister Addresses Gathering

LD2305163095 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1227 GMT 23 May 95

[Speech by Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi at the opening of the "first government-governors meeting to assess aspects of the government's program," in Algiers on 23 May — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Prayers and peace be upon the most honorable of messengers. Honorable guests, members of the government, governors, ladies and gentlemen. Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you. [passage omitted] I am honored, pleased, and satisfied to meet today in this hall the vanguard of an Algeria that is moving ahead, an Algeria that is lifting its head high, and that is now on its way to victory over doubt, rancor, and obscurantism, an Algeria that is proving once again, anew, to itself and to the world that it is a united state, nation, and people, and that it will remain so. [passage omitted]

I have already told you at our meeting on 14 August 1994 that, in the eyes of citizens, you are the government and the authority. On the terrain, you are in fact the representatives of the government, the prime minister and all members of the government. [passage omitted] Ladies and gentlemen, we are meeting to assess some aspects of the government program, and to ascertain the extent of our commitment to these aspects. Later, we will have the occasion to take stock of the social, economic, and political situation in the country, in complete transparency. Our intention is not to make a courteous and friendly assessment, nor is it our intention to fall in the trap of self-flagellation and self-torturing. On the other hand, we have no right to say that the situation has or has not improved. It is up to the people to notice this itself.

Regular and sufficient provisions should be seen in markets, not on paper; an improving security situation should be felt on the terrain and not just seen in statements; a growing purchasing power should be reflected in the shopping bag of the bread winner, and not in the ministry of trade statistics. If we want to restore citizens' trust in the state then this should take place on the terrain and not in speeches. We cannot convince the people of our good faith except by telling the truth and doing transparent work, for the trust of the people is one thousand times more important than all the loans of international institutions. Powerful states are built only by citizens' unity and cohesiveness. However, we must not forget, and we must fight their lies and misleading campaigns, and therefore, we must continuously inform our people and explain to it what is going on. No, Algeria is not in a civil war: Algeria is working, moving ahead and living despite all obstacles. No, Algeria is not economically stifled: Algeria possesses important resources and incomes, and it is economically developing despite pressures. No, Algeria is not being boycotted by foreign institutions and countries: Algeria has good relations with the Arab, African, and Asian countries, the European Union, the United States, the IMF, the World Bank, and with all the international bodies. No, Algeria is not a dictatorship: Algeria is a democracy which is building itself with its opposition parties, its civil society and its trade unions, with employers and with its free press. No, Algeria is not in the death throes: Algeria is on its way to revival, to be more beautiful, stronger, more Algerian, more democratic and more republican than at any time before.

True, this new Algeria is on its way to revival through pain, but it is indeed a new Algeria which will never

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accept to pay with blood for the greed for power and money. It is a new Algeria where the religion of mercy and compassion, and the culture of respect for different opinions permit the emerging of authentic Algerians as the best successors of Jugurtha and Emir Abdelkader. Honorable guests, members of the government, governors, ladies, and gentlemen; the Algerians will never abandon their religion, because a reactionary wind has shaken their values, a wind that came from the East, fed by the moral decadence of some people, and the political calculations of others. The Algerians will never accept the abandonment of our Arab and Islamic values, sacrificing the spirit of our people to another wind, a wind that came this time from the West fed by the collapse of ideologies and the unbridled materialism of money power, just as the Algerians did not accept sacrificing their freedom and modernity to the language of obscurantism and decadence. The political leaders should realize all this. Algeria needs unionists not dividers; Algeria needs builders not destroyers. The Algerian people want peace; they do not want war, especially a war between Algerians. The Algerian people aspire to tranquillity, for development and justice. It never wants to see its history, holy religion and language exploited to make it suffer. It expects from politicians and party leaders proposals for peace, prosperity, and progress. The Algerian people want to hear from the mouths of political leaders proposals and programs for peace, development, and construction, not death and destruction threats.

The time has come for the people to express their opinion. Let those who want to represent the people come forward and ask for their opinion. Let them stand in the elections and propose a program of peace, justice, and economic development. Let them stand in the elections and let the people express their opinion freely and clearly.

Ladies and Gentlemen: It is my duty to speak and I have done it with sincerity; and I have not spoken only in my capacity as prime minister, but also as a responsible citizen who believes that there is nothing better than a happy medium and not sterile extremism.

I have addressed you, you the public servants, while remembering the souls of our colleagues who have fallen for the sake of Algeria, such as the late Mohamed Bellal, the governor of Tissemsilt Province, who was assassinated by treacherous hands in the prime of his youth. His only crime was to be in the service of his state, nation, and people.

In order to pay tribute to him and to all the Algerian men and women who have fallen for the sake of the homeland, I ask you to stand up and observe one minute silence.

Comments on Election Preparations

LD2305141795 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] Our colleague Messaoud Boulatiour met with the prime minister [Mokdad Sifi] on the sidelines of the meeting [between the government and the country's governors] and asked him what was the nature of the meeting; his answer was the following:

[Begin Sifi recording] The meeting is for coordination. It enables the government and the governors to examine a number of points on the government's program and to evaluate our progress and shortcomings and their reasons. This meeting follows the meeting that took place last August. It was scheduled in the government's program. God willing, meetings like this will be held in the future on a regular basis. We need coordination inside each ministry, between the various ministries, and between ministries and governorates. [end recording]

[Announcer] Our colleague also asked the head of the government about the presidential elections and the preparations under way to hold them. He told him: The end of June will be the date for evaluating the current preparations and submitting a report to the state president.

[Begin Sifi recording] Preparations for elections have made significant progress at the material, technical, financial, and human levels. Most of the governorates are about to complete their preparations. Maybe there are four or five governorates which are still facing some problems, but I think there is enough time, from now until the end of June, to complete everything.

[Boulatiour] Is it possible that that will be an announcement by the end of June on the date of the elections?

[Sifi] The end of June is a date in which the governmental commission will be submitting its report to the state president. [end recording]

Interior Minister Speaks

LD2305191295

[FBIS Editorial Report] Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic at 1703 GMT on 23 May carries a 22-minute recorded speech by Algerian Interior Minister Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif to the first governors-government meeting held in Algiers on 23 May.

Cherif thanks Prime Minister Sifi for allowing him to open the meeting, welcomes the governors and government officials attending, and expresses happiness for holding the meeting, which falls within the scope of the recommendations that were put forward immediately

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after the government was formed with the aim of concentrating public interest and government work in the field.

The minister then discusses the Interior Ministry's first initiative in arranging a meeting between the prime minister, some officials, and citizen representatives. He says the meeting was devoted to discussing the conditions of local authorities. This initiative, he adds, formed "a starting point for a comprehensive, diversified, and multifaceted work" in agreement with the prime minister and was aimed at "reviving, activating, and promoting local authorities," which were paralyzed as a result of a circumstantial political situation.

The minister then elaborates on the measures adopted to achieve this goal. He reports that governors, heads of departments, and local officials were transferred, and new governors were instructed to do their best to restore credence to the state's structures and authority, restore order and public security, and bring the administration closer to the citizens. In this context, he says, local authorities were instructed to receive the citizens, and "the governors were informed of the need to receive no less than 200 citizens per week."

At the security level, Cherif says that the "core of municipal guards" was created and includes "24,000 elements, including 13,000 elements who have started their field work."

The minister says that all of these measures have put an end to the isolation of public authorities and have restored vitality to them. He says that initiatives and potential have been freed, particularly in the area of dealing with the citizens needs, i.e. housing, employment, and investment.

Cherif then admits the existence of some problems at the level of local authorities and attributes these to a lack of funds, outdated approaches to local administration, and the centralization of powers.

He then sums up the activities of local authorities since June 1994 to implement the government programs in the different spheres, including preparations for the upcoming presidential elections, reviewing voters' lists, and making and distributing voters' cards.

Delegates View Security, Elections

LD2405085395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The first meeting between the government and provincial governors resumed this afternoon at the Palais des Nations to assess the government's program. Our colleague Masoud Boulteour followed the proceedings, and sent us this report:

[Boulteour] The first day of the government's meeting with the provincial governors was held behind closed doors, away from the gaze of the press. [passage omitted]

Sources reported that, judging by the presentations and the discussions which followed them, the obvious improvement in the country's security situation was discussed.

With regard to the preparations now under way for the presidential elections, these sources told us that the situation is completely under control in most of the provinces but to a lesser extent in other provinces, that is, the security situation in 54 of the 1,500 municipalities remains difficult. [passage omitted]

Concerning the resumption of studies in provinces where a boycotting of studies was observed, in Tizi Ouzou province three-quarters of the total number of students at schools and vocational training colleges returned; the number returning remains low in Bejaia, but high in Bouira. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Official Calls Israeli Land Decision 'Positive'

NC2305113595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1121 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 23 May (MENA) — A responsible source in the Foreign Ministry stated today that despite the Israeli Government's retraction of its decision to expropriate Palestinian lands in East Jerusalem, it should be noticed that the direct reason for this action was the attempt by the Democratic Peace Front and the Arab Democratic Party in the Knesset to withdraw confidence from the government.

The source added: While this step is positive, it must be made certain that it is not a tactical move taken to confront internal situations or foreign pressure.

Jordanian Ambassador Welcomes Expropriation Freeze

NC2305153795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1507 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 23 May (MENA) — Nayif Sa'ud al-Qadi, Jordanian ambassador to Egypt and Jordan's permanent representative at the Arab League, has welcomed the Israeli Government's decision to freeze its plan to expropriate Arab Palestinian land in Jerusalem.

In remarks to correspondents, al-Qadi said the Israeli decision is a step in the right direction and encouragement to continue the peace process.

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But the Jordanian ambassador noted that the decision to freeze the expropriation plan is not sufficient and it would be better if the Israeli Government abolished it completely.

Papers View Israeli Land 'Retreat,' U.S. Role

NC2405080295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0610 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 May (MENA) — Cairo newspapers today comment on Israel's retreat from its decision to confiscate Arab land in East Jerusalem and the reasons which promoted Israel to make the decision.

AL-AHRAM says Israel's suspension of the land confiscation order proved beyond doubt that even minimal Arab unity can achieve a lot. It adds that no matter what the circumstances surrounding the Israeli Government's decision to suspend the expropriation, this decision was the fruit of a purposeful Arab effort and strong Arab move launched by the Arab League.

The paper explains that, through its leaders, politicians, and media, Egypt was the first to say directly to Yitzhaq Rabin's government that its hesitation and various tricks greatly jeopardize the Middle East peace process.

AL-AKHBAR newspaper says it is likely that the U.S. Administration may have a connection with Israel's decision to suspend the expropriation of Arab land, especially after a decision to convene an Arab mini-summit in Rabat on Saturday amid a hostile climate. This climate was created by the Clinton government because of its reckless act in using its veto at the Security Council to protect its ally Israel.

The paper adds that the U.S. Administration was fully aware of what would happen at the Arab summit and the expected attack on its flagrant stand to avert a Security Council resolution despite Israel's ugly conspiracy and defiance of international law and the UN Charter. The paper does not exclude the possibility that Washington may be the one who proposed the suspension of Israel's decision to escape the trial which would have been held for it at the Rabat conference.

AL-JUMHURIYAH warns that Israel's decision to suspend the confiscation of land may be a new maneuver by Israel, which came under collective denunciation by the international community represented by the Security Council resolution that would have received unanimous approval had it not been for the U.S. veto.

The paper says that despite Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres' attempt to link the Israeli Government's retreat to the Knesset's opposition forces, the fact is that this retreat was prompted by a distinct, cohesive Arab stand.

The paper emphasizes that serious Arab solidarity, coordination among the Arab countries, and their unified stands is the surest way to confront the conspiracies being hatched against the Arabs.

The opposition newspaper AL-WAFD stresses that the Israeli Government's retreat from its decision to confiscate land in Jerusalem was because of its fear of a no-confidence motion, nothing else.

It says the suspension of the confiscation decision is merely a tactical move to evade the crisis of no-confidence and affirms that Israel will press ahead with its plot to Judaize Jerusalem. It notes that there is a secret plan to empty Jerusalem of its Arab residents in five years.

The paper stresses the need for an Arab initiative to confront the Israeli scheme and the need to clear Arab air of whatever elements hindering positive Arab resolutions.

Al-Azhar Calls U.S. 'Worst Friend' of Arabs

NC2405102895 Paris AFP in English 0908 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, May 24 (AFP) — The shaykh of al-Azhar, the highest authority in Sunni Islam, on Wednesday [24 May] warned Arab leaders to beware Israel's freeze of its land grab in east Jerusalem and dubbed Washington the "worst friend" of the Arabs.

"Al-Azhar reproaches that worst of friends, whose friendship we seek and whom we idolize, but who gives us only hatred and evil intentions," Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq said in a statement published by Egyptian papers Wednesday.

"But loyalty obliges us to keep its friendship while calling it our worst friend," he added.

The shaykh said Arab countries were honoring their commitments in peace talks with the Israelis, who in contrast "haven't honored any. They kill, they betray, they destroy and then hide behind the veto of their closest friend."

The United States vetoed on May 17 a UN resolution condemning Israel's seizure of 53 hectares (131 acres) of land in annexed east Jerusalem, raising a storm of protest from Arab and Islamic countries.

On Monday Israel was forced to freeze the decision to avoid a no-confidence vote before the Knesset which would have brought down the government.

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Jad-al-Haqq warned Arab leaders not to trust the Israel's retreat.

"This new Israeli position does not fool anyone. We know from experience that (Israel) breaks its agreements, which leads us to mistrust it."

Dependence on U.S. Rejected, Iran Possible Ally

NC2405122595 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 17 May 95 p 8

[From the "Close-up" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "It Is Dictating and Not Negotiating"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The international battle over the indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] after a month of inciting Arab public opinion at times and cooling it at others ended with victory for U.S. diplomacy and success in obtaining the vote of the majority. The U.S. success was Israel's, too, and confirmed the U.S. policy that wants to impose Israeli hegemony on the Middle East and the Arab region.

The United States did not try to conceal this truth while it was putting its strong pressure on Egypt and the Arab countries that dared to take a cohesive stand that defended the establishment of a just and balanced peace where both the Arabs and Israel would have equal commitments toward the issue of nuclear proliferation and weapons of mass destruction. The least that Egypt, Syria, and the other Arab countries could do was to refuse to agree to an indefinite extension and seek to have a resolution issued calling for a nuclear free zone in the Middle East, which all countries would join without exemption.

But the United States — which from the start refused even to talk to Israel to convince it to join the NPT and worked to exempt it from any commitment to put its nuclear facilities under international control — persisted in its overt pressure to make the resolution attached to the NPT call on all the Middle East countries to make the treaty vague and without any mention of Israel, the only country in the region that has nuclear weapons.

Needless to say, the United States has thus upset the global nature of the treaty, consecrated the principle of double standards as the basis for dealing with the Middle East, and planted the seed of doubts in its ability to lead the Middle East peace process to a successful conclusion.

This biased U.S. stand was known to all but its affirmation in this arrogant and arbitrary way might open the eyes of many Arab parties to the fact that their national security is now completely subject to Israel's will and that the peace process is not being conducted through negotiations but in accordance with what Israel dictates.

The logical outcome of this is that the Arab countries need to take a franker stand in rejecting U.S. pressures on Iran and to have doubts about U.S. allegations that Iran is seeking to obtain nuclear weapons because these allegations only speak for Israel.

What I fear most is that it will come to the point where Iran will become the only country with the capability to defend pan-Arab security and to resist Israel's dictated and unilateral conditions for the settlement.

Musa on Mideast Nuclear Race, Peace, NPT, Iran

NC2305194295 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 18 May 95 p 3

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Salah al-Din Hafiz; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Hafiz] Can we say that the explicit U.S. bias toward Israel on a serious issue such as nuclear armament harms the Middle East peace process? Will Israel's sense of victory in this nuclear issue drive it toward further intransigence at the negotiations?

[Musa] Not at all. True, Israel's position leans on American support, but it is rejected by the Arabs. With whom will peace be made? It will be made with the Arabs through bilateral negotiations. The Arab-Israeli peace requires balance; if there is no balance, peace will run into trouble. There can be no peace or cooperation in the Middle East if one state enjoys a special status. It is unacceptable for one country, to the exclusion of others, to possess deterrent weapons, such as nuclear arms, with which to threaten this country or that if they do not submit to its will. A solution must be found to Israel's nuclear issue.

Although Israel managed, through the United States, not to have its name mentioned in the decision on the Middle East issued by the New York conference on the renewal of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT], the decision [indirectly] refers to it, whether it likes it or not, and whether any other country likes it or not.

[Hafiz] Now what?

[Musa] We come to the bigger issue. The NPT conference in New York has ended but the Israeli nuclear program remains. We will never submit to this under any circumstances. [passage omitted]

[Hafiz] Minister, you have used the term "preventive policy." What preventive policy can Egypt and the

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Arabs pursue over this nuclear threat? What are the practical options available to us now?

[Musa] The first step was raising the issue. The second step was taking a position and sending a warning message to everybody. The message says that no pressure from any party will change the firm Egyptian policy. Egypt is not a fragile state that can be pushed left or right or forced to follow the policy of this country or that. It does not collude in important issues. So we told everybody that the dangerous Middle East is threatened with the Israeli nuclear program. Everybody acknowledged this. We told them that all the Arabs stand on one cohesive side despite the tremendous pressure being applied. This was actually proven during the vote on the NPT's extension. You cannot imagine the amount of pressure that was applied in this issue; international diplomacy had not seen such pressure this century. I would like to emphasize to you that most countries, whether they voted for or against the indefinite extension, are, deep inside, against what happened. What happened killed the credibility of the pact. Those who are happy with the extension as achieved in New York do not know that most states, including those that came under pressure, have lost their confidence in the NPT. I say this based on my conversations with many ministers who voted for indefinite extension.

[Hafiz] What is Egypt's next step?

[Musa] We will negotiate with Israel on the nuclear issue. If we do not negotiate this subject within the multilateral talks on peace in the Middle East, then what can we negotiate there? If we want a new Middle East and a just peace in the region, the Israeli nuclear issue must be addressed. If this does not happen, a climate for comprehensive peace cannot be created. Comprehensive peace is achieved not only by returning the land; it requires regional cooperation, which cannot be conducted under the Israeli nuclear threat. We must know now where we are heading, and we should know particularly that the Israeli nuclear program will not be the only one in the region. Many parties will enter into a broad nuclear race.

[Hafiz] Do you think the nuclear race in the region has started?

[Musa] I hope this is not true. But I think the existence of a permissible Israeli nuclear program excluded from any international obligation — as if Israel was an exceptional country with exceptional status — is a blatant challenge to security, sentiment, and interests in the region, and this creates a real problem. Logically, if things remain as they are, there will be a nuclear arms race in the region. Previously we wasted many opportunities to confront Israel's nuclear armament. We cannot do this again.

[Hafiz] Some reports say that Egypt, after all that has happened, has begun reconsidering its nuclear program, which it stopped in 1986.

[Musa] I will not discuss this; I will refrain from talking about it. [passage omitted]

[Hafiz] U.S. President Bill Clinton has apparently failed to convince Russian President Boris Yeltsin to stop nuclear cooperation between Russia and Iran. An Iranian official recently announced that his country has a program for building 10 new nuclear plants. What is your comment on this?

[Musa] Iran and any other country has the right to obtain nuclear reactors for peaceful use. This is an undeniable right. If not, the NPT would be dangerous if it prevented states from building peaceful nuclear plants. This is certainly Iran's right. Indeed, it is the duty of every NPT member state to benefit from nuclear technology assistance for peaceful purposes. This is why President Yeltsin insisted, along with China, for instance, on supplying Iran with nuclear reactors and plant for peaceful purposes. The military side is another story.

[Hafiz] Well, against this, how can Egypt benefit from these privileges?

[Musa] Egypt is benefiting. But we can benefit more regarding our peaceful nuclear program. We must support and develop this program as much as we can. This is a right guaranteed by the NPT to all member states. We must review all this to benefit from the Treaty's provisions to support Egypt's ability to achieve development and scientific progress as long as we are members of the Treaty and under the existing system of international supervision. [passage omitted]

Commentary Urges Review of Arab Approach to Peace

NC2205132095 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 22 May 95

[Commentary by Mahmud Marzuq: "Arab Summit To Employ Arab and Islamic Resources in Facing Challenges"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports on Arab consultations to hold a mini-summit come at a very sensitive time. The summit is an Arab counter-action to consolidate the Middle East peace march and face the challenges after Israel's expropriation of Palestinian land in occupied

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Arab Jerusalem and the repercussions of the U.S. veto of a UN Security Council resolution condemning Israel for expropriating the land.

These new challenges generate more tension in the region and call for Arab action that rises to the level of events to face these challenges on every available level — regional and international.

The Arab mini-summit will, therefore, be the focal point of Arab action to face the challenges emerging on the various levels. It will be the axis of Arab action and, in the meantime, Islamic action, since Arab states, primarily Egypt, Syria, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, are members of the Jerusalem Committee and represent the centers of joint action on both the Arab and Islamic levels.

Regional and international developments require serious action to face the threats the peace process is encountering on the different levels. On the regional level, Rabin's government is keeping up its settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories, particularly the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This basically torpedoes the process of peace, which was originally based on the principle of exchanging the occupied Arab territories for peace with Israel in accordance with international legitimacy and UN Security Council resolutions.

Internationally, the peace process, designed to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, was based on an honest, positive, and active U.S. role in accordance with the rulings of international legitimacy. The U.S. Administration still rejects the idea of moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem in view of the harm this would do to U.S. interests in the Middle East and because it conflicts with international resolutions issued since 1947. These resolutions urge states not to move their embassies to Jerusalem.

It is evident that the U.S. Administration is inclined to adopt Israeli logic on two particular occasions: The first is related to the settlements and holy Jerusalem and the other to the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. This bears directly on the security demands of Arab states and the Middle East as a whole.

This American development requires Arab action on the leadership level to determine the features of the U.S. shift and its impact on the regional peace process. Every Arab meeting on the leadership level adds to the Arab gains. Arab solidarity has always been the fence shielding the Arab nation's interests. Any step in this direction adds a positive gain in that context.

The pressure imposed by developments is so severe that the Arab approach to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict must be reviewed, Arab priorities rearranged, and the Arab vision reiterated on how to build a just, comprehensive, and lasting regional peace in which holy Jerusalem constitutes the focal point.

Morocco

Iran's Foreign Minister Holds Talks With Officials

Discusses 'Strong' Ties With Filali

LD1905181095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 19 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The expansion of bilateral political, economic and cultural relations, and developing cooperation between Tehran and Rabat in the world of Islam and in international arenas were discussed at today's meeting between the Iranian and Moroccan foreign ministers.

According to a Central News Unit report, Mr. Velayati, minister of foreign affairs of our country, who is in Rabat to take part in the meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference contact group, met with Abdellatif Filali, Morocco's prime minister and foreign minister.

Mr. Filali referred to the historical nature of Iranian-Moroccan relations and described the political and cultural relations between the two countries as being good and strong. He stressed the desire of his country to further expand and strengthen relations in all fields. They also exchanged views important issues pertaining to the world of Islam, as well as international issues, including the Middle East, Holy Jerusalem and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Our foreign minister referred to current developments in the world of Islam and in the Middle East, especially the confiscation of lands belonging to Muslims by the Zionists, and the unchangeable nature of the Zionist usurpers. Referring to U.S. unconditional support for this regime and its vetoing the Security Council resolution, Mr. Velayati said: The U.S. Government is sacrificing the interests of the world of Islam and Islamic countries in the Middle East for the sake of its own domestic rivalries.

Our minister of foreign affairs held a separate meeting today with the Moroccan minister of energy and mines.

Meets With King, Others

LD2005234995 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 20 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Hassan II received, at the Royal Palace in Rabat this evening, Iranian Foreign Minister Mr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati. He

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was accompanied by Mr. Ja'far Shamsiyan, Iranian ambassador in Rabat; Mr. Mohammad Hosni, a member of the Iranian parliament; Kadhim Khansari, head of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry; and Askar Khadji, head of the North Africa section in the same ministry.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Taieb Fassi Fihri, secretary of state for foreign affairs and cooperation, and Mr. Mohamed Motassim, representative of the Royal Court.

Discusses Israeli 'Vicious Intentions'

LD2105100295 Tehran IRNA in English 0915 GMT 21 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 21, IRNA — King Hassan of Maghreb [Morocco] termed usurpation of another part of the Muslims' land by Israel and the conspiracy to transfer the U.S. Embassy to al-Bayt al-Moqaddas as a dangerous move which required the necessary move by world Muslims.

King Hassan made the remark in a meeting with the Iranian foreign minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, in Rabat Saturday [20 May].

He touched on the measures taken by his country in this connection, adding that Rabat has already sent representatives to some Arab countries to hold an Arab summit at a limited scale.

King Hassan also remarked that the al-Quds committee would hold a meeting in a near future.

He underlined expansion of Rabat-Tehran mutual ties in various fields specially in bilateral cooperation for proximity of religions.

Velayati who is currently in Rabat to attend the meeting of the contact group of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), conveyed the verbal message of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to King Hassan.

The Iranian foreign minister termed the trend of mutual ties as positive and to the interest of the two countries.

Velayati regretted the deplorable situation of Muslims in various parts of the world including in Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Bosnia and said that usurpation of another part of Islamic lands by the Zionist regime was a fresh example of Tel Aviv's vicious intentions.

He underline the need for an overall and unified measure by the Muslim world towards such aggressions which he said have always been supported by the U.S.

Velayati noted that those who defended Islamic values and sanctities against aggressions would be accused of supporting violation, extremism and terrorism.

The two sides also discussed expansion of Tehran-Rabat ties and the recent aggressions of the Zionist regime.

Visit Seen 'To Boost' Ties

LD2005143095 Tehran IRNA in English 1344 GMT 20 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 20, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Maghreb's speaker of parliament, Mohamed Jalal Essaid in a meeting in Rabat on Saturday [20 May] emphasized the need for expansion of parliamentary relations between the two countries.

Essaid voiced the interest of the Moroccan Government and parliament in consolidating ties with Iran in political, economic, cultural and parliamentary areas. He said Velayati's visit to Rabat has provided an opportunity to boost historical relations between the two nations.

He assured Velayati that the parliament of Maghreb was determined to prepare legal grounds for consolidating bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"We are interesed in expanding not only parliamentary relations but also mutual cooperation at international level within the world of Islam," he said.

Velayati said expansion of historical relations between the two nations would be useful and cooperation between the parliaments of two countries would help boost mutual relations.

Statement Issued on Visit, Ties

LD2105133695 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 21 May 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Iranian Foreign Minister Mr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati left Rabat this morning at the end of a visit to Morocco during which he participated in the meetings of the contact group of the OIC on Bosnia and had talks with the Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Minister Dr. Abdellatif Filali. [passage omitted]

Following this two-day official visit by the Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, a joint communique was issued in which both sides stressed the common denominators and the historic, and cultural ties between the two peoples, and expressed their wish to bolster and strengthen these ties. The two sides expressed their readiness to participate in the solving of the problems confronting the Islamic nation, and to bolster and develop bilateral relations in various spheres. Agreement

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was also reached with regard to the establishment of a joint commercial-economic committee which will hold its first meeting in Tehran in July of this year, and the exchange of trade and economic delegations, and the organization of joint trade and economic fairs.

At the parliamentary level, the two sides reaffirmed the importance of forming parliamentary friendship [as heard] in both countries. The Iranian side expressed its appreciation for the efforts being made by the Kingdom of Morocco to administer the work of the OIC.

Sudan

Al-Bashir: Government Capable of 'Routing' Rebels

EA2305182795 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the Republic, Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, has confirmed that the Armed Forces are capable of routing the outlaws and of liberating every inch of the territory of the homeland.

He said this yesterday in the military zone of Equatoria while addressing a ceremony organized to honor the martyr Sayf al-Dawlah's forces.

Lt. Gen. Al-Bashir said that peace would come through dialogue and the liberation of the territory. His excellency confirmed the support of the leadership for the Armed Forces and popular defense forces to protect the land and the honor of women.

The president of the Republic praised the heroic role of the martyr Sayf al-Dawlah's forces in the defeats of the rebels.

Government Said Near 'Confrontation'

MM2405095795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 May 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Uthman Mirghani: "Sudan: Signs of Confrontation Between the Government and al-Ansar"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — Sudan appeared to be on the verge of confrontation between the government and al-Mahdi's al- Ansar Movement in the wake of the memorandum addressed to President Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir by the al-Ansar Affairs Committee calling for the immediate release of al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, former prime minister and leader of the Ummah Party who was detained a week ago, warning against any harm to him, and expressing readiness to defend him.

The memorandum had the tone of an ultimatum when it referred to al-Ansar's "history of sacrifices and martyrdom," pledging to "defend the movement's leaderships," and asserting that "harm to the leadership (al-Sadiq al-Mahdi) is harm to al-Ansar's dearest values."

According to sources of the Ummah Party and the al-Ansar Movement, nine of al-Ansar's prominent leaders in Sudan delivered the memorandum to Lt. Gen. al-Bashir with copies to the head of the judiciary, the speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, the chief of security, the Human Rights Committee, the attorney general, the lawyers doyen, the governor of Khartoum, and the governor of Omdurman. [passage omitted]

The memorandum, a copy of which was obtained by AL-SHARQ AL- AWSAT, said: "Under this regime, al-Ansar has been the target of a series of harassments and provocations ranging from insults to its leadership, confiscation of some of its properties, denial of freedom and right of expression for its members, imprisonment of imams and preachers, and other harassments including confiscation of Imam al-Mahdi's home complex and the fourth mosque."

It added: "Al-Ansar was subjected to all that but it remained patient to prevent sedition in the interest of the safety of the country and its people and in compliance with the instructions of its leader (al-Sadiq al-Mahdi) who counseled patience and goodwill." [passage omitted]

The memorandum of the al-Ansar Affairs Committee said that "the Sudanese people's suffering has reached a point not denied even by the authorities." It called for the immediate release of al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, adding in a warning tone that "the al-Ansar leadership has a central position and any harm to it means harm to al-Ansar's dearest values. Lives would be willingly sacrificed in defense of the leadership."

It added: "We in the al-Ansar Affairs Committee warn of the consequences of the detention of al-Sadiq al-Mahdi.... We most strongly demand his immediate release and the return of Imam al- Mahdi's home complex, and we hold the authorities responsible for the consequences of the continued detention. We will proceed to defend our leadership."

The memorandum concluded with the following Koranic verse: "Truly God loves those who fight in his cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure." [passage omitted]

Former Prime Minister Said Involved in 'Plot'

AB2305211795 Paris AFP in English 2054 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, May 23 (AFP) — A Sudanese Foreign Ministry official confirmed Tuesday

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[23 May] that former Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi is under arrest and said he was being interrogated for involvement in a plot against the government of General Umar al-Bashir.

The official, Umar Yusuf Barido, the first undersecretary at the ministry, did not elaborate on the plot but said elements close to Mahdi outside the country have confessed that a plot had been planned.

Barido was commenting on a recent statement attributed by western media to state minister at the foreign ministry, Ghazi Salah Eddin Atabani, that Mahdi was arrested by the Khartoum government for interrogation on his involvement in an attempt against the al- Bashir's military government.

This was the first time an official statement about the arrest of the former premier was made in Sudan.

In another development, the Sudanese undersecretary said his government was considering an extension of a two-month ceasefire in the war against rebels in southern Sudan. The truce was announced last March and is to end this month.

'Biased' Amnesty International Refused Visit

AB2305145595 Paris AFP in English
0850 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, 22 May (AFP) — Sudan has reiterated a refusal to let members of Amnesty International visit the country to investigate allegations of human rights abuses, the daily AL-INQADH AL-WATANI said Monday [22 May]. A senior Sudanese official, quoted by the daily, said the government would not reopen dialogue with Amnesty unless the organisation reconsidered its "hostile" attitude toward Sudan.

Dr. Ahmed al-Mufti, the rapporteur of the Sudanese Government's Human Rights Advisory Council, said the Advisory Council had recommended to the government to bar Amnesty investigators following the organisation's publication of a booklet entitled "Orphans' Tears" critical of Sudan's human rights record.

Al-Mufti said an Amnesty visit would be meaningless since the organisation had already taken a hostile attitude by publishing the booklet and by demanding abrogation of Islamic laws in Sudan. He said the book was based on information obtained from the Sudanese exiled opposition. "Amnesty has become a patron of the opposition," Al-Mufti charged. He accused foreign non-governmental organisations of being biased about human rights in Sudan.

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Kuwait

Cabinet To Withdraw Constitution Inquiry Request

LD2305203295 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1910 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 23 May (KUNA) — Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, the first deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, confirmed here tonight that the government would tomorrow announce the withdrawal of the request for the interpretation of Article 71 of the Constitution, which it had made to the Constitutional Court.

He said that this announcement would be made during the cabinet session that is to convene at 1300 tomorrow, Wednesday 24 May.

In a statement to journalists at the National Assembly premises, Shaykh Sabah said: "We had been seeking a justification for withdrawing the request, and it was provided by the National Assembly's approval today of a number of ordinances" that were issued during the period when the assembly was dissolved.

Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, met yesterday evening Ahmad al-Sa'dun, the speaker of the National Assembly, ministers, and a number of National Assembly members within the framework of efforts to contain the dispute between the legislative and executive authorities over the request for the interpretation of Article 71 of the Constitution.

An official statement issued following the meeting said that those present had reviewed all the aspects related to this subject and had discussed the means of containing the dispute "in a brotherly and amicable atmosphere characterized by objectivity, a spirit of responsibility, and the predominance of the higher national interest over all other considerations."

In its session today the National Assembly examined the ordinances issued during the period when the assembly was dissolved and took decisions regarding them.

It is to be recalled that Article 71 of the Constitution stipulates that "if anything occurs between the terms when the National Assembly is convened or during a period when it is dissolved that requires arrangements to be made speedily and without delay, the amir may issue decrees regarding it that will have the force of law, provided they do not contravene the Constitution or the financial estimates appearing in [words indistinct] the budget."

The article also stipulates that "these decrees must be presented [words indistinct] within 15 days of their being issued if the assembly is in existence to its first session, and if the assembly is absent or its legislative term has ended; and if it is not presented it will lose its force of law retrospectively without the need for a decision on this to be issued."

The article also indicates that "if it is presented and not approved by the assembly, it loses the force of law retrospectively unless the assembly decides to approve its implementation in the preceding period or to settle the resulting consequences in another manner."

National Assembly Meets, Discusses Various Issues

Decree To Increase Public Borrowing

LD2305174195 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1321 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait City, 23 May (KUNA) — The National Assembly has passed a decree to increase the public borrowing requirement from 6 billion Kuwaiti dinars to 10 billion Kuwaiti dinars. The vote was carried by 20 votes to 15, with four members of the government abstaining.

It is noteworthy to recall that an agreement was initially reached between the government and the National Assembly that the latter would refrain from discussing the 15 order decrees that had been issued during the suspension of the National Assembly. However, according to a number of members of the National Assembly, an agreement was reached last night between Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah Al-Salim al-Sabah, heir apparent and prime minister, the National Assembly speaker, and a number of deputies that a number of order decrees could be examined by the National Assembly.

Further Decisions Outlined

LD2305194795 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1520 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait City, 23 May (KUNA) — [passage omitted] The parliament decided to withdraw two Financial Committee ordinances for further discussion. The first concerns the creation of a public company under the name "Kuwait Communications;" the second is about the expropriation of some real estate, for which 1 billion Kuwaiti dinars has been earmarked to be spent over 10 years.

Moreover, the parliament has passed on recommendations to the Public Amenities Committee concerning a request to discuss the decision of municipal departments to demolish public parks and walls surrounding houses. The committee's task will be to redraft these recommendations before they are submitted again to parliament.

The recommendations include the suspension of the demolition work, the laying down of clear rules by the

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municipality on the use of public squares, the repair of the public parks that have already been damaged, and an end to all transgressions and violations in all residential areas without exception.

The National Assembly also passed the 1987 ordinance amending the first article of the 1963 law on the establishment of the Higher Defense Council, in addition to passing the 1986 ordinance on the amendment of Article 6 of the amir's decree of 1959 on the Kuwaiti nationality law and the first article of the 1963 law on the election of members of the National Assembly.

The Assembly suspended the 1987 ordinance amending some of the provisions of the 1959 law on Kuwaiti nationality, which grants naturalized Kuwaitis the right to be elected and to stand as candidates when 30 years have passed after their naturalization.

The result of the assembly's vote on the ordinance was 18 members in favor, 14 abstentions, and six against. [passage omitted]

The Assembly withdrew an ordinance related to approval of the economic, trade, and technical agreement between the government of the State of Kuwait and the government of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan. [passage omitted]

Oman

Iranian Culture Minister Arrives for Visit

Discusses Ties With Officials

JN2005150395 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 20 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Fahr Bin-Mahmud Al Sa'id, deputy prime minister for cabinet affairs, received at his office this morning Mostafa Mirsalim, Iranian minister of culture and Islamic guidance, and his delegation, which is currently visiting Oman.

The talks addressed the friendly bilateral ties and means to promote the existing cooperation in various areas. The two officials also reviewed a host of current regional and international issues. Furthermore, they discussed issues of common interest.

The guest minister expressed his great pleasure at visiting the Sultanate, saying that the visit has given him and his delegation a good opportunity to acquaint themselves with the progress and prosperity achieved in Oman, thanks to the rational policies and wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id.

Information Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Muhammad al-Rawwas today also received Mostafa Mirsalim, Iranian minister of culture and Islamic guidance, who is currently visiting the Sultanate.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral ties and issues of common interest.

Cultural Agreement Signed

LD2305160695 Tehran IRNA in English 1355 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, May, 23, IRNA — A memorandum of understanding was signed by Iran and Oman on cultural cooperation at the conclusion of a visit to Oman of Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mostafa Mirsalim on Tuesday.

According to the agreement the two countries will exchange lists of historical documents and books.

Holding exhibitions of two countries' manuscripts and historical documents in Oman's capital, Muscat in September 1996, making use of Iran's experiences in restoring manuscripts along with teaching Omani personnel to restore manuscripts during April, May and June of 1996 by Iranian experts and exchange of publications are among other points included in the letter of understanding.

In a meeting with his Omani counterpart Mirsalim invited him to participate in celebrations marking the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution.

According to the agreement, Iran voiced its readiness to admit a group of Omanis to make use of Iranian experiences in the area of visual arts and also hold an exhibition of the works of Iranian artists in Muscat in 1997.

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Opposition: Minister Removed Amid 'Sharp Differences'

NC2305144295 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In a decree issued by the Presidential Office, Saddam Husayn yesterday dismissed Watban Ibrahim al-Hasan as interior minister and appointed Muhammad Zimam in his place. According to the decree, Watban Ibrahim was appointed adviser to Saddam Husayn with the salary and allowances of a minister.

Earlier reports indicated that sharp differences among officials of the Iraqi regime emerged after the 'Udayy-supervised BABIL newspaper accused the Interior Ministry of failing to control the chaotic security situation in the country and blamed the interior minister for it.

Government Paper Views Israeli Land Suspension

JN2405091995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0700 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 24 May (INA) — The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH has asserted that the popular and official reactions to the Zionist entity's decision to confiscate Arab land in Jerusalem and the consequent U.S. veto at the UN Security Council have confirmed that the large-scale terrorist crimes committed by the United States and the Zionist entity, its protege, have not killed the militant Arab spirit.

In an editorial entitled "The Last Tango in Tel Aviv Comes to a Halt," by Chief Editor Salah al-Mukhtar, the paper, which speaks for the government, adds: These strong reactions have confirmed the failure of the U.S.-Zionist crimes to write off the name of Palestine, which some have tainted in the name of peace and realism, forgetting that peace and realism, if not coupled with justice and respect for the peoples' rights and dignity, will only produce humiliating capitulation.

The paper goes on to say: The suspension decision announced by the Zionist entity means that the Arabs' survival instinct and their quest for freedom have remained stronger than the readiness for capitulation and submission demonstrated by several Arab parties in the name of realism. The events of the past few days have shown that the Arabs have not died and will never die, and that the plotted surrender to the old Zionist scheme will never succeed.

The paper notes the positions of some Arab rulers who danced with the Zionist entity in the utter darkness of night, saying that these rulers now believe that the era of complete subservience to the United States has been ushered in, and that the stage is now set for them to dance the "Last Tango in Tel Aviv". These rulers, the paper adds, have reached the conclusion that there is no longer any need for them to mask their true loyalties by disavowing their connections with Zionism. They have disgustingly shed their false concern to vindicate Iraq and Palestine, and begun to make public utterances saying that they [the Jews] are our dear cousins, to whom all doors must be opened, whereas "our brothers" in Iraq deserve what has befallen them.

AL-JUMHURIYAH goes on to say: The events that took place yesterday and the day before yesterday must be thoroughly examined, especially by the Arab leaders who have been infatuated by the "Last Tango in Tel Aviv" and forgotten about the Palestinian and Iraqi ordeals. Similarly, these events must be considered by America's monkeys, the filthiest of all, who sought to make election gains at the Arabs' expense.

The paper concludes by saying: These people must learn the lessons provided by the past few days. Anybody endowed with even meager intelligence should be able to do so. The lessons in question stipulate that Palestine will remain our first chaste bride, and that we will remain ready to make dear sacrifices to promote its chastity and the sacredness of its Jerusalem and Yafo. As for Iraq, they must learn that it will certainly reassert itself, particularly since the pillars of the U.S. stage have collapsed and world states have begun to befriend Iraq, asking for handshakes and generosity and seeking to make it happy.

Al-Sahhaf Defends Status of UNSC Compliance

MM2305145795 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 May 95 p 5

[Interview with Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf by Raghidah Dirgham in New York; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Dirgham] During your visit to New York you focused on explaining the reasons for your rejection of Resolution 986. Does that rejection deserve a one-week visit, instead of seizing the opportunity to focus on cooperation and on meeting the demands in order to enable the international community to respond to Iraq?

[Al-Sahhaf] We came to New York to explain the reasons that prompted Iraq to reject Resolution 986. The other aims include exchanging views with the Security Council members as regards focusing work on speeding up the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. Focusing work means exchanging opinion and presenting our view vis-a-vis the extent of the resolutions' implementation... and knowing the

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objectives of those parties that say that the resolutions have not been implemented. We provide them with the information, and they are free to judge. There is much clamor and untrue talk arising from political objectives aimed at continuing the campaign against Iraq and continuing the policy that Iraq's return to the oil market would collide with their interests.

[Dirgham] This all clashes with the positions of the Security Council member states, including Russia and France, which are sympathetic toward Iraq. Their position is that Iraq has not met all the demands in order to enable them to urge the implementation of Paragraph 22, and thus the time has not come yet to implement the Paragraph.

[Al-Sahhaf] Paragraph 22 concerns getting rid of the weapons banned under Resolution 687, and also getting rid of the industrial capabilities that could help to manufacture these weapons. The scientific opinion is that of Iraq and the committee assigned to remove the banned weapons. The views of all those promoting ideas outside the framework of the scientific report lack accuracy. Thus if the verdict is based on the committee's work and what Iraq says supported by evidence — that is, if it is fair and proceeds from what has already been implemented and what is still left — the outcome is that all the aims mentioned in Resolution 687 as regards the banned weapons have been achieved.

[Dirgham] The committee does not say that. It stresses that the biological weapons file is still open.

[Al-Sahhaf] I said that all the main aims have been achieved. This is also the committee's view. It says that the (armament) monitoring system is now operational and that there are some details to be ascertained and clarified, and these are minute, not fundamental, questions.

[Dirgham] The committee says that it cannot tell the Security Council that Iraq has implemented everything as long as some files are still open, such as, for example, the biological weapons file. Do you intend to respond to and meet the committee's demands?

[Al-Sahhaf] It has no specific demands thus far. The committee says that we have to settle the issue of 17 tonnes of agricultural material. Scientifically, this issue is already settled, but the committee wants evidence.

How is it settled scientifically? All the cultures became ineffective in 1993, and it would take Iraqi laboratories at least 26 years to ferment 17 t onnes. Scientifically, they know that the material perished in that way. But they are saying they cannot say that the material was destroyed or damaged. They want to know — with documentary evidence — where the material is.

[Dirgham] Are you willing to provide such documents?

[Al-Sahhaf] We have not concealed any documents, and we will work with the special committee in order to provide it with credible documents.

[Dirgham] Do you intend to fulfill all that is required of you to satisfy the committee?

[Al-Sahhaf] That is general talk. I am talking specifics.

[Dirgham] But readers know that the biological file has not been closed yet and that the committee is demanding that this file be completed, saying that it has not yet been completed.

[Al-Sahhaf] True, it is saying that this file has not been completed, because we have 17 tonnes whose fate it wants to know.

[Dirgham] Do you intend to complete that file when the committee's head, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, visits Baghdad later in the month?

[Al-Sahhaf] We are agreed that that file should be closed.

[Dirgham] When?

[Al-Sahhaf] When? No one knows.

[Dirgham] Why?

[Al-Sahhaf] Because it requires time, but not a lot of time.

[Dirgham] So the biological weapons file is unlikely to be completed during Ekeus' visit....

[Al-Sahhaf] That is speculation. I repeat that am talking about a formula. You are speculating that it will not be completed. Others predict otherwise. It is mere speculation.

[Dirgham] Do you intend to wait until after the chemical weapons file, which has been reopened, is completed?

[Al-Sahhaf] The chemical file has not been reopened. It is complete. They said that we have renewed the full, comprehensive, and final report [sentence as published]. It consists of thousands of pages. They read and studied it, and they now require some clarifications. The delegation (of the committee's experts) is in Baghdad. The file has not been reopened.

[Dirgham] What is Iraq's strategy? Is it to implement all the demands, whether they concern weapons, returning property, or Resolution 688 in order to confront the Security Council with the reality, the reality of Iraq's compliance with everything it is requested to do? Or is it a strategy insisting on Paragraph 22, even though the United States has pointed out that implementing the part

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concerning the weapons is not sufficient to implement the clause, and that it will prevent the council from lifting the oil blockade on Iraq as long as it has not implemented the other demands?

[Al-Sahhaf] It is the strategy stipulated in the Security Council resolutions. When we demand that Paragraph 22 be implemented, we say that the implementation concerns the banned weapons only. Anyone who confuses matters is ill-intentioned and will not succeed, because it means that he wants to act outside the framework of the Security Council resolutions.

[Dirgham] And he — and indeed the United States — can obstruct the implementation of Paragraph 22.

[Al-Sahhaf] That is another issue. I am talking about the Security Council and resolutions adopted by it whose meaning is clear. Some Security Council member states say that the resolutions' meaning is clear. So if a council member does not want to acknowledge this, that is his problem.

[Dirgham] But it is your problem if that member insists on maintaining the sanctions and the oil blockade against Iraq.

[Al-Sahhaf] Those are issues for the future. We are dealing with the Security Council in accordance with the stipulations of its resolution.

[Dirgham] What is the objection to implementing the other resolutions and demands? You have already offered a great deal, so why not offer the little left?

[Al-Sahhaf] With regard to the obligations (imposed) on Iraq, every obligation — according to its nature — is taking its course as regards implementation. For example, the Kuwaiti missing persons question is different in nature and has nothing to do with point "C" of Resolution 687 concerning weapons. At any rate, it is being worked on.

[Dirgham] Why not tackle that question speedily?

[Al-Sahhaf] There is no speeding up or slowing down. The matter is proceeding according to its nature. The Americans are still looking for missing persons in Vietnam. This issue will take time. Anyone who requests that the question be expedited is trying to politicize the question.

[Dirgham] What about property? Madeleine Albright, U.S. representative to the United Nations, said that you painted Iranian equipment and sent it to Kuwait on the grounds that it is Kuwaiti property.

[Al-Sahhaf] That is a lie, and we challenge them. It is a kind of U.S. arrogance. All Kuwaiti property has been returned, and you can refer to the (UN) secretary general's report. The Kuwaitis have other lists, and what they are alleging does not exist in Iraq. The U.S. ambassador claimed that there is military equipment, submitting false photographs to the Security Council. We have returned all the equipment we moved from Kuwait. Nevertheless, we have told them that we will return anything we find on the battlefield.

[Dirgham] So you believe that you have settled the property issue.

[Al-Sahhaf] We have returned all the property we had. What remains are disputed demands, and we are willing to scrutinize what they are saying with them.

[Dirgham] You imposed on yourself an additional ambiguous demand, namely "to prove your good intentions." Following your military movements on the border with Kuwait, a new resolution was adopted, making it conditional that you prove your good intentions.

[Al-Sahhaf] No. That is mentioned in Paragraph 21 of Resolution 687, which stipulates that the sanctions should be reviewed every 60 days in the light of Iraq's conduct. As for the Iraqi military maneuvers conducted in the fall of 1994, they are a completely different issue, regardless of all that chaos and hysteria. Our movements were inside our country, and no one can prevent us from conducting such movements in ordinary maneuvers.

[Dirgham] You are behaving as though you have won a war and as though you are not subject to international sanctions and pressure — which is inflicting numerous tragedies on your people.

[Al-Sahhaf] That is untrue. I do not think you know what is happening.

[Dirgham] Sanctions are imposed on Iraq, and the people are suffering.

[Al-Sahhaf] The sanctions were imposed on Iraq in 1990, because we entered Kuwait. But when that situation ended, they continued to impose the sanctions for political purposes that have nothing to do with the Kuwait issue. What we are witnessing now proceeds from some states' objectives that have nothing to do with what happened in 1990. As for your statement that "you are behaving as though you won," we have heard such talk often. You must understand that Iraq is patient, and people in Iraq know what is happening and they will not be deceived by current games and policies. If the embargo had anything to do with Kuwait, it would have ended by now. But its aims are attributable to other objectives outside the framework of the entire crisis.

Iraq has a policy, and its capabilities are known. And it will continue to safeguard its policy and capabilities. What is wrong with that? What is required?

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[Dirgham] Realism. The logic of Iraqi policy seems strange, and the Iraqi people are the victim.

[Al-Sahhaf] No, the Iraqi people are not victims. They are patient and they are heroes....

[Dirgham] Iraq's policy is to escalate, threaten, and then climb down.

[Al-Sahhaf] No. That is what the foreign media say.

[Dirgham] Crises broke out with the special committee as a result of the escalation, and here you are now cooperating fully with the committee.

[Al-Sahhaf] No. The crises that erupted with the inspection teams were attributable to the existence of spies, who came for the sake of provocation. Once we agreed with the committee that they would not send this type of people, cooperation became normal and reasonable, focusing on specific issues.

[Dirgham] You resisted the implementation of Resolution 715 concerned with the long-term monitoring of armaments, then you adopted the method of offering little by little, instead of exploiting the thrust of the initiative by accepting the resolution, but later you were compelled to accept it.

[Al-Sahhaf] That is an erroneous view.

[Dirgham] The same happened with regard to recognizing Kuwait's sovereignty and borders.

[Al-Sahhaf] That is an erroneous view. We accepted everything provided that the factors necessary for its implementation were available. Resolution 715 was adopted in 1991, and it contained a great deal of interference in Iraq's affairs outside the disarmament aim. So we did not accept it. The special committee admitted later that the resolution contained matters that could be described as interference. When these issues were altered, the resolution became logical, hence the joint desire for correct legal implementation. This is why Iraq agreed later. There are people trying to impose unjustifiable interference methods to serve other objectives. When these methods end, there will be reasonable room for agreement.

[Dirgham] You conclusively rejected Resolution 986 after negotiating with the Security Council, which made some amendments. What will you do if the council fails to implement Paragraph 22? Does Resolution 986 not help to meet the humanitarian needs until Paragraph 22 has been implemented?

[Al-Sahhaf] Resolution 986 does not meet any of the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. It stipulates the sale of a quantity (of oil) worth $550 million, after deducting sums of money. It means that the Iraqi citizen gets $7 every three months, hence no change or improvement in the situation or solution to any of the difficulties we are facing as a result of the arbitrary implementation of Paragraph 22. That is from the material angle you raised, as though dignity and independence are of no value. So the basis is to do with principles, namely the country's independence and sovereignty. The resolution effectively abolishes Iraq's sovereignty and really threatens regional unity. It says that the three governorates in North Iraq which constitute the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan should not be under Iraqi sovereignty and that they should be placed under UN supervision for the sake of giving every citizen $7 worth of food and medicine a month.

[Dirgham] You say that what is happening in north Iraq is not your responsibility, because it is not under the authorities' control.

[Al-Sahhaf] Yes. So we do not agree to that. And if we agreed to Resolution 986, we would be agreeing to that strange situation, and there is the big difference. We despise that action, which is causing north Iraq to become the way it is now: a safe haven for the Kurds, and chaos is rife. We are against that, and so are our Kurdish people, but it was carried out by brute force.

[Dirgham] So the rejection of the resolution is final. What do you expect as regards the U.S. position opposed to lifting the oil blockade?

[Al-Sahhaf] We are not dealing with that issue. We are dealing with the Security Council, and we will work to meet the special committee's demands. When they are implemented, three permanent member states of the council — and others, who are a majority — will be waiting for the main event — the implementation of Paragraph 22. The Russians, the French, and the Chinese have avoided clashing with the Americans in order to deny them any opportunity when the time for Paragraph 22 comes. So we will work to provide what the special committee wants, stressing that it should not submit to U.S. pressures. We will expose any attempt to submit to these pressures. We will demand this through cooperation with the other Security Council members and when conditions are favorable for the implementation of Paragraph 22. There is a general atmosphere of harmony.

[Dirgham] The United States — through Ambassador Albright — pointed out that it would object to that, even if Ekeus submits a favorable report to the Security Council.

[Al-Sahhaf] We do not deal with that nonsense. We are dealing with an international establishment. Ironically,

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the U.S. ambassador, who gave the world a headache because of her repeated talk of international legitimacy, is now outside international legitimacy.

[Dirgham] Why are statements and campaigns emanating from Baghdad against Albright personally?

[Al-Sahhaf] Have they spared anyone? Should a superpower make such base statements?

[Dirgham] Why launch campaigns against individuals? It is the policy of a state....

[Al-Sahhaf] Because they launched campaigns against Iraqi individuals. The Iraqi media are replying, using their own method.

[Dirgham] The Iraqi media say that Ekeus is a CIA agent. Do you agree with that?

[Al-Sahhaf] I do not agree, but the Iraqi media are entitled to speak.

[Dirgham] When will you think of a new rhetoric?

[Al-Sahhaf] I do not know what you mean by old, so that I could talk about something new. You should specify what you mean.

[Dirgham] To give up escalation. Attempts are being made by some Gulf states which have received Iraqi officials with the aim of normalizing relations and rehabilitating Iraq....

[Al-Sahhaf, interrupting] Who rehabilitates us? What are you talking about?

[Dirgham] That is what officials say: reconciliation with Iraq, its return to the Arab fold, and its rehabilitation.

[Al-Sahhaf] That is wrong. First of all, they sent invitations to us, expressing their wish to improve relations with Iraq. In return, we expressed our wish to improve our relations with the Arab brothers. There is nothing of what you said, such as "rehabilitating" Iraq.

Iraq is a major Arab country. No one can cancel its role. So if it is going through a crisis, it does not mean that Iraq has changed. Anyone who thinks that history is repeating itself is deluding himself. If there is a desire on anyone's part to cooperate or to secure a common ground, it is welcomed. This orientation has begun to grow among all Arab states without exception. In the sense that, if there is a desire, we are ready. It is all to do with the expression of willingness by the parties concerned.

[Dirgham] Iraq is the party currently isolated regionally.

[Al-Sahhaf] We are under siege, but we are not isolated.

[Dirgham] Some Gulf states have expressed the desire to restore Iraq to the Arab fold. Is Iraq willing to reassure its neighbors, and are there serious attempts to reassure them?

[Al-Sahhaf] Our policy is based on encouraging and developing better relations with the Arab states. Even when relations experience the worst of crises, good relations remain the basis. With regard to the Gulf states without exception — and I repeat, without exception — we stressed and continue to stress that we are willing to make a real start — a start that takes account of and is based on common interests and the Arab nation's higher interests. There is not any feeling or position.

I visited two fraternal Arab states in the Gulf (Oman and Qatar). We expressed this feeling and this official policy clearly. And we are seriously ready for a joint action in this context. Any level with which we begin will be a start to be developed later.

[Dirgham] There are fears that Iraq might flood the market with oil if it is allowed to export oil. Can you reassure those expressing these fears?

[Al-Sahhaf] Those fears are baseless. Because when Iraq's quota is restored — and Iraq is an old member qualified to return to the market, because it has a huge reserve — its return will be gradual, as the oil-producing parties using Iraq's quota will relinquish this quota gradually. So when Iraq returns to the oil market, it will return gradually... step by step. Logic says that those using Iraq's quota should return this quota to it in the same manner, that is step by step. That is governed by the factors influencing the oil market and the demand for oil, and the best framework is OPEC. The claim that Iraq's return would lead to the collapse of prices is baseless. All these matters can be organized. Reality dictates that Iraq's return will be gradual.

[Dirgham] Some circles fear a so-called "hot summer" coming from Baghdad as a result of the U.S. nonresponse to it.

[Al-Sahhaf] We do not deal with such interpretations. We have complied with the Security Council resolutions and implemented all the main parts. We will deal with the Security Council, not the United States and its domestic policies. That does not concern us.

[Dirgham] Some people say that there is a crisis on the horizon expected to emerge in the summer....

[Al-Sahhaf] Those are provocations.

[Dirgham] Iraqi-Iranian relations arouse confusion. Sometimes they are good and at other times the two sides exchange complaints and accusations. What is the status of relations at present?

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[Al-Sahhaf] Relations contain a difficult legacy, a big accumulation of negative aspects and distrust as a result of the eight-year war. However, we have been keen since the war ended to develop the tendency which we believe can lead to initiating the normalization process and express the two countries' interests. I met with (Iranian Foreign Minister) 'Ali Akbar Velayati three times. We agreed on an agenda to establish a political dialogue between the two countries — a dialogue focusing on the normalization process between us and Iran. We have made considerable headway vis-a-vis solving the major outstanding problems between the two countries. And we agreed that (Velayati) should come to Baghdad to begin the first round of political dialogue at foreign minister level. He postponed the visit several times for reasons which I believe are domestic. As the normalization process has not begun to bear fruit, the negative accumulations are still there. This is why relations between Iraq and Iran are swinging back and forth, blemished sometimes by tension, but then they become calm... and so on until the normalization process begins.

[Dirgham] Some Arab Gulf states fear that Iran might have aims that are unfriendly — let us avoid saying hostile — in view of their past fears and experience with the attempt to export the Iranian revolution and other things. Does Iraq agree with this assessment?

[Al-Sahhaf] According to what I read and hear, all Gulf states are praising their relations with Iran and working to maintain good relations. They say that Iran is a neighbor and a friend.

[Dirgham] And what about your own assessment?

[Al-Sahhaf] What I said is sufficient.

[Dirgham] There are always reports of endeavors to bring Israelis and Iraqis together. These reports are denied, only to emerge again. Is it smoke without fire?

[Al-Sahhaf] It is fabricated smoke without fire. It is designed to distort matters. They are merely baseless allegations.

[Dirgham] Why does Iraq not agree to the Middle East peace process, which is accepted by the parties concerned?

[Al-Sahhaf] That has nothing to do with us, and we have no comment.

[Dirgham] Are you not opposed to the process?

[Al-Sahhaf] We have nothing to do with it.

[Dirgham] What is happening with Turkey? It seems sometimes that matters are worsening between Iraq and Turkey.

[Al-Sahhaf] No. Not at all. That happened only when the Turks embarked on that erroneous step, namely sending their Army to north Iraq. Apart from that, the situation is different. We have exchanged visits and expressed joint ideas on economic and trade cooperation once the embargo has been lifted. In fact there are border trade and major dealings between us.

[Dirgham] So why did you protest at the pumping of Iraqi oil through Turkish-Iraqi pipelines as one of the reasons for your rejection of Resolution 986?

[Al-Sahhaf] We rejected the principle of the Security Council's interference in bilateral relations.

[Dirgham] If it is acceptable to you, why protest, especially as you are saying that you have good relations with Turkey?

[Al-Sahhaf] We have excellent relations. But what does that have to do with the Security Council? Why is it interfering between Iraq and Turkey? Tomorrow it will work to interfere in relations between Iraq and Iran. The principle is not acceptable at all.

[Dirgham] After Turkish forces withdrew from north Iraq, there was talk of altering the border with Iraq. What happened?

[Al-Sahhaf] That emanated from some Turkish officials. It is a mistake and very dangerous. There are fixed borders and a treaty between the two countries. That idea (the alteration proposal) is incited by the United States. But we have transcended this matter.

[Dirgham] After all that happened, how would you describe Iraqi-Turkish relations?

[Al-Sahhaf] In terms of the foundations, they remain stable. They are sometimes blemished by situations that inspire alarm as a result of short-sighted actions emanating from the Turkish side as regards north Iraq. While their Army was occupying north Iraq, a Turkish delegation visited Baghdad, and frank discussions were held, based on the good relations between the two countries. But we were frankly harsh. They made a big mistake by pushing their Army into north Iraq.

[Dirgham] The Turks' justification for their incursion into north Iraq was the existence of a power vacuum in that region and the need to pursue the Kurdish Workers Party [PKK]. How is the Kurdish issue handled between Iraq and Turkey, especially after those events?

[Al-Sahhaf] They [events] made things go from bad to worse with regard to the armed Kurdish movements, and they have weakened the issue a lot. They have also weakened the Turkish Government vis-a-vis the Kurdish problem inside Turkey. The Kurdish problem

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in Turkey is inside that country. The problem is not the few (PKK elements) hiding in north Iraq as a result of the Iraqi authorities' absence. One of the reasons that prompted them (the Turks) to enter north Iraq was to divert attention from the problem inside Turkey. We have warned them from the outset. We told them: The solution to your problem, that is the Kurdish problem inside Turkey, which is an internal problem, is not in north Iraq. And the problem inside Iraq cannot be solved through the U.S. "[Poised] Hammer" forces. On the contrary, we believe that noninterference in internal affairs is the foundation, and we are willing to coordinate between the two governments over everything that concerns the two countries. We are willing to negotiate. We in Iraq have long decided that the problem of the Iraqi Kurds can only be solved peacefully and democratically. We are the only country that recognizes the Kurds as a second nationality in the country. Their cultural rights should be recognized within Iraqi unity. The constitutional, legislative method is self-rule. The Turks have a different view. They believe that the annihilation method is the way to solve the problem of 16 million Kurds in Turkey. That is their business.

INA Criticizes U.S. Policy on Iraq, Other Countries

JN2305144895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1100 GMT 23 May 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 23 May (INA) — The facts in the arena of conflict with the U.S. Administration show this administration's failure in destroying Iraq and escalating international tension with it.

It becomes clear to he who follows the policy of Washington, which fabricates conflicts with several world countries, that the United States has failed to stop life in Iraq or annihilate the Iraqi people. The United States also failed to stop or postpone the international economic conflict with it.

Washington and Britain failed to achieve their objectives behind all aggressive chapters, and the only thing left is the economic war through obstructing the Security Council's fulfillment of its obligations toward Iraq in accordance with Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. The U.S. position becomes more isolated day by day after Iraq succeeded in exposing the U.S. aggressiveness toward Iraq and the crucial Arab causes, thanks to the shrewdness of its leadership. The whole world knows that the United States had exploited very badly the end of the Cold War after the Soviet Union's collapse and it is foolishly steering the situation to rob the Arab resources. There are many examples on this represented in what the United States did in the Gulf and Iraq. It deprived the world of the chance of benefiting from the end of confrontation between the conflicting camps in the interest of world peace and security. It created a tense atmosphere that is full of hostility and economic tension. The U.S. economic relations with China, Russia, France, Japan, and Germany are well known. It wants to win everything and to prevent the world states from carrying out any economic activity.

Due to its arrogance and double-standard policy toward Arab and international policies, the United States blocked the role of international establishments in handling international issues. Millions of people daily die in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as a result of hunger and diseases. This is taking place because the international establishments, including the United Nations, do not play their role in handling these international problems.

The people of the world are aware of the reality of the false U.S. allegations about human rights and other hollow slogans. This state has never stopped making problems and creating hotbeds of tension in several world countries in order to rob their resources. What happened in northern Iraq and the Turkish invasion of the Iraqi territory under U.S. protection is the best evidence on this policy.

Patriarch Urges Pressure on U.S. To Lift Sanctions

LD2305175195 Lisbon Radio Renascenca in Portuguese to Europe 1600 GMT 23 May 95

[Italicized passages recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Things are getting increasingly more difficult for the Iraqis as the embargo by the international community continues. People starve to death every day on the streets of the capital. The patriarch of Baghdad made an urgent appeal today in an exclusive interview with Renascenca. More details from Raquel Abcassis:

[Abcassis] The patriarch says it is unacceptable for a world that calls itself civilized to let a country reach the stage Iraq has reached. He goes on to say that many people are starving to death in his country:

[Patriarch Raphael Bidawid, in Italian with superimposed translation] *We can call it misery because people are suffering from starvation, in fact they are starving to death. Those most affected are the children and the sick. Many children go to bed without food because they do not even have any bread to eat. This is the situation we have reached. We need to send an SOS on behalf of the Iraqi people.*

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[Abcassis] Five years after the war, the United Nations continues to impose an embargo on Iraq. The patriarch of Baghdad says this situation is unfair and wrong:

[Bidawid] *They wanted to impose peace on us, their own peace. This peace cannot be fair if it is not balanced, if it is not the same for everybody in the region. We are not the children of slaves and the others the children of masters. We are all people from the same region. We have the same rights and therefore they should not favor some nations over others. A nation has the right to live. And then this is the policy of the two weights and the two measures. They did not impose on Israel one single Security Council resolution; they did nothing to Israel. In the meantime, they are treating us with cruelty because of nothing, out of sheer stupidity.*

[Abcassis] Rafael Bidawid is making a very special appeal to the EU for it to put pressure on the United Nations and the United States so that they will end the embargo:

[Bidawid] *You must put pressure on the United States and its allies; they are in charge of the world's political order. You must exert pressure so that justice can be achieved for all people without prejudice, especially those suffering the most and who are most oppressed, like the Iraqi people. [passage omitted]*

Kurd Villagers Claim Turkish Planes Bomb Border

NC2305162095 Paris AFP in English
1534 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Ankara, May 23 (AFP) — Turkish planes have bombed the border region of northern Iraq killing one person and wounding four others, sources in Diyarbakir (southeast Turkey) said Tuesday [23 May].

The source, quoting Iraqi Kurd villagers, said a bomb fell on Nuzuri village in the Batufah region about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the border with Turkey early Sunday.

Civilian and military officials in Ankara said they had "no information" on the bombardment. [passage omitted]

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Meretz Threatens To Quit If Autonomy Deal Misses Deadline

NC2305152595 Paris AFP in English 1318 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, May 23 (AFP)—The junior partner in Israel's coalition government, the left-wing Meretz party, threatened Tuesday [23 May] to quit if a deal was not wrapped up to spread Palestinian autonomy by a July 1 deadline.

"If it is not signed by July 1, there will be no government," Environment Minister Yosi Sarid, one of four Meretz cabinet members, told AFP.

Meretz would leave the coalition but still vote with the government from outside, Sarid said.

The 12 Meretz MPs intend to hand their ultimatum to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin in a meeting set for Wednesday.

Israel and the PLO agreed the July target date for a deal to redeploy the army outside West Bank towns and enable Palestinian elections to go ahead.

However, Rabin warned last week that he could not be certain of meeting the deadline, which is already a year behind the schedule outlined in the 1993 Declaration of Principles for autonomy.

The ultimatum came after Meretz, which opposed the confiscation of Palestinian land in Jerusalem, had to take a back seat as five Israeli Arab MPs stole the glory by forcing Rabin to freeze the confiscations on Monday.

The five, supported by the right-wing opposition which is in favour of the confiscations, threatened to bring down the government with a no-confidence motion unless Rabin backed off.

"The decision-making process in the government is as crazy as it can be," complained Sarid.

"The decision to confiscate land in Jersualem is the most miserable and lamentable since the parliament was elected," in June 1992, Sarid added.

"The no-confidence motion not only saved the conscience of the (Meretz) party it also saved Israel's conscience.

"The international community can take Israel seriously again now after this crazy act," Sarid said.

Despite his comments, Meretz showed no signs of quitting the government while Rabin was insisting that he would never go back on the confiscations.

Meretz's 12 seats in parliament are vital to Rabin, whose Labour party has 44 MPs out of a total of 120, and has to rely on the five Israel Arab MPs for a majority.

Meretz Decides Not To Pose Ultimatum

TA2405044195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Meretz's Knesset members and cabinet ministers will confer with the prime minister today and voice their view that the interim agreement with the Palestinians must be signed by 1 July. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Meretz threatens to cause a coalition crisis, to the point of quitting the government, if their position is not accepted. Nevertheless, in a meeting the faction held last night it was decided not to pose an ultimatum to the prime minister, and Minister Yosi Sarid released a communique in this spirit.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0405 GMT at 24 May reports the text of Sarid's communique as follows: "As a partner to the negotiations with the Palestinians I still believe that an agreement can be attained with the Palestinians by 1 July, and I have strong reasons to believe that. However, it must be clear that even if 1 July is not a sacred date, it is an exceptionally important one. We are not in the habit of threatening and we will not ask for commitments and promises. If we ourselves, based on our best judgment, conclude that the negotiations have reached a crisis and cannot continue we will simply get up and leave the government."]

Our correspondent points out that Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer has called on Labor to open negotiations with SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], United Torah Jewry, and if necessary also with Tzomet, in a bid to expand the coalition. According to him, the government should no longer rely on the Arab Knesset members who have created a partnership with the Likud and will henceforth submit frequent no-confidence motions which will not allow the government to work.

Meretz, Rabin Set Date for Elections

TA2405082795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Meretz's Knesset members and cabinet ministers emerged very encouraged from their meeting with the prime minister, and said that the interim agreement with the Palestinians would be signed by 1 July. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that it was decided in the meeting to set next fall as the target date for elections in the territories — that is, in September or October — while the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment will start even

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earlier than that, despite the fact that the IDF demands approximately nine months to start redeploying.

Our correspondent points out that the members of Meretz did not pose an ultimatum to the prime minister, and only Knesset Member Dedi Zucker said that if an agreement is not signed by 1 July he will suggest to the Meretz institutions to quit the government.

Labor, Likud, U.S. Seen Defeated From Land Affair

TA2305135595 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 23 May 95 p 3

[Commentary by Moti Bassok: "Everyone Came Out Badly"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Everyone came out looking very badly in the aftermath of the affair involving Arab land expropriation in Bayt Hanina and Bayt Safafa — everyone, with the possible exception of HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] and the ADP [Arab Democratic Party]. Those who emerged in particularly bad shape were Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, the government as a whole, Opposition Chairman Knesset Member Bibi Netanyahu, and all the right-wing factions along with him.

The decision to expropriate 535 dunams of Arab land — an astonishingly small plot — at the height of the sensitive, precarious, and accident-rife negotiations with the Palestinians was a political folly. It was an even greater folly since it came in the footsteps of a previous attempt by the Rabin-Ben-Eli'ezer duo to evict Arabs from their land near Efrata, an attempt that was eventually exposed by the media and sharply denounced by the international community.

Rabin should understand that he cannot speak of peace morning, day, and night, while at the same time continuing to expropriate land from his negotiating partner. This time the reaction of the international public opinion as a whole and the Arab states in particular was especially acute. It included moderate Arab states, such as Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco.

The prime minister must have been in a fit of strange blindness when he backed Ben-Eli'ezer. No less surprising was Shim'on Peres' support for Rabin and the expropriations all along the way, including the cabinet meeting two weeks ago and his conversations with Husni Mubarak and 'Amr Musa in Cairo.

He did so although senior ministry officials and aides offered different views and applied pressure in a different direction. With regard to Ben-Eli'ezer, the only pertinent question is whether he is in the correct government, whether he had not landed in a center- left-wing government by mistake. In any event, his policy — and not only with regard to Efrata, Ma'ale Adumim, and Jerusalem — is strongly reminiscent of that of his predecessors Ari'el Sharon and David Levi.

The question of questions is, of course, how the Rabin-Peres government will be able to continue functioning in the next 18 months, after it has been exposed both outside and inside the country for what they are, and after even loyal ministers have begun doubting the sagacity of the government's two heads.

The government's survival faced a merely mild threat, and yet it caused a hasty retreat from a resolution the government had level- headedly endorsed on an issue that is allegedly the apple of its eye — Jerusalem. Now that its weakness has been exposed, the government will be subjected to repeated blackmail on minor as well as major issues by HADASH and the ADP, as well as certain coalition Knesset members, because some people will do anything to remain close to the udders of power.

Both Yasir 'Arafat and Hafiz al-Asad must have thought yesterday: If Rabin gave in to pressure from Hashim Mahamid and Darawshah, why should he not succumb to ours? One only has to know where and when, and to have a lot of patience.

The Americans, who vetoed a UN Security Council resolution on the expropriations issue, also appear in a totally ridiculous light — even to themselves. It will be apparently very long before the United States decides to use the veto tool for Israel again.

Bibi Netanyahu yesterday swept the entire opposition into a series of what their approach would judge as seriously misjudged tactics. For the first time they defied the Jewish consensus on Jerusalem, which they avow is more important to them than anything else. Furthermore, they steered the government to a decision binding future governments — namely, that Israel cannot expropriate Arab lands even in Jerusalem.

They broke a ban promoted by the extreme members of their public on the two Arab parties, HADASH and ADP. Because if the Likud, the National Religious Party, the United Torah Jewry, and SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] are allowed to back HADASH and ADP on the Jerusalem land expropriation issue, everyone has a right to do the same. Bibi Netanyahu, who led this misjudged move, will pay dearly for it, maybe soon.

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Housing Ministry Encouraging Building in Jerusalem

TA2305154795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer says his ministry is encouraging further building in Jerusalem. Another 4,500 apartments were due to be approved in a few days and later 3,000 more, he told Qol Yisra'el. On this, Harley Braidman:

[Begin Braidman recording] Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer said the last thing in the world he expected was that the confiscation of 85 acres of land in Ramot would cause such an uproar. He expected there would have been more fuss over Har Homa, but the land there had been expropriated five years ago and most of the 450 acres there was Jewish land; so there was no real problem, it was a routine matter. In Bayt Safafa the building was for public purposes: 400 housing units for Arabs, a building for the new Jerusalem Police district headquarters, and a new jail instead of the Russian Compound facility.

Ben-Eli'ezer said some members of the government had taken pains to ensure the fuss over Jerusalem was brought about earlier. However, building in Jerusalem was not only expropriations, he told Qol Yisra'el. The ministry was constructing 3,000 apartments in Ramat Rahel, building in Alona, 'Emeq Arazim, 'Emeq Naftoah, Neve Ya'aqov, and many other places in west Jerusalem. He hoped that soon detailed planning of Har Homa would be completed and construction begin.

The ministry also had a giant building project for Yafo worth $175 million to renovate the town, including preservation of sites, new housing and infrastructure to make Yafo one of the finest cities in the Mediterranean: Yafo for the present local residents, Jews and Arabs first. [end recording]

Betzelem, the Israeli human rights group that monitors events in the West Bank and Gaza, claims that the government will go ahead with large-scale building in Arab areas of Jerusalem despite yesterday's decision. Betzelem's senior researcher, Eytan Felner, told Mark Weiss that the freeze announced yesterday only affect 135 acres of land that were confiscated recently. [passage omitted]

1,500 Homes Planned for Palestinians in Jerusalem

NC2405092195 Paris AFP in English 0843 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, May 24 (AFP) — Israel's interior ministry announced Wednesday [24 May] that it had given the green light to build 1,500 homes for Palestinians in annexed east Jerusalem.

"The district planning committee has decided to publish the scheme to construct 1,500 houses for the inhabitants of the village of Sur Bahir," a ministry spokeswoman told AFP.

Faysal al-Husayni, the unofficial Palestinian minister for Jerusalem, doubted that Israel would follow through with the plan.

It would be the first time the Jewish state has built homes for Arabs in the city since the eastern sector was annexed in 1967, although there have been several plans.

"What we want is for them to allow us to build in the suburbs of Jerusalem," al-Husayni told AFP.

"They are talking numbers and plans and if there are any we want to see them," he said.

Sur Bahir falls within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem and is adjacent to an area confiscated in 1991 for a new Jewish quarter called Har Homa.

The ministry committee also approved Tuesday the construction of 6,500 homes for Jews on 185 hectares of land (455 acres) at Har Homa.

Bulldozers have already started work and construction should begin in the next six months.

The government's decision on Monday to freeze the confiscation of a further 53 hectares (131 acres) of mainly Palestinian lands in east Jerusalem does not affect the Har Homa project, a ministry spokeswoman said.

She added that the announcement of the plan for Palestinian homes had nothing to do with the uproar over the 53 hectares. "It's a pure coincidence," she said.

Since 1967 more than a third of the land in east Jerusalem has been confiscated to build 35,000 homes in 10 districts where 160,000 Jews live.

The Palestine Liberation Organization has demanded east Jerusalem, home to some 155,000 Palestinians, for the capital of a future state.

Negotiations on the city's final status are due to start by May 1996, according to the 1993 Declaration of Principles for autonomy.

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Security Source: Palestinian Police Aid 'Terrorists'

TA2205120195 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 22 May 95 p 1

[Report by ITIM]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Security sources assess that the terrorists who planted the bomb in Netzarim infiltrated the hothouses after cutting the settlement's fence. Netzarim secretary Shlomo Kostiner said in reaction: "The Arabs are continuing to harm us. Since the Oslo accord the attacks are on the rise."

He claims that "the Palestinian police are not doing enough to prevent the terrorists from infiltrating the settlement. There is cooperation between Palestinian policemen and terrorists, or at least they are turning a blind eye."

Kostiner's remarks were supported by a senior security source in the Gaza Strip.

"We cannot trust the Palestinian police. According to our intelligence information, the Palestinian police's northern sector includes several terrorist collaborators whom we know for certain are enabling the terrorists to enter Jewish settlements in the area."

This was said by the senior IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Gaza Division security source after the Netzarim attack yesterday.

The source said that for a long time it was feared that key elements from the Palestinian police's northern sector, including officers, are enabling Gaza Strip terrorists to safely infiltrate the settlements for terrorist purposes.

"Perhaps I sound like a settler, but this is no secret. The Palestinian police daily show their incompetence. They cannot be trusted. Every day we encounter incidents that the Palestinian police could have prevented, and it is a miracle that these incidents have ended without casualties. Palestinian policemen were involved in the two Netzarim incidents. Our intelligence information is reliable, and we have already lodged a complaint with the joint office. Senior political and security sources must make new decisions regarding the role of the Palestinian police."

Hebron Market To Reopen After Years of Closure

TA2105174195 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 21 May 95

[Video report by Yoram Binur]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Today, two senior ministers — Moshe Shahal and Yosi Sarid — made the first step toward defusing the so-called Hebron land mine. The Jewish settlement in Hebron has turned the city into an arena of incessant friction. The ministers, accompanied by the coordinator of government activities in the territories and the head of the Central Command, met with Hebron's military governor, the city's mayor, and Jamil al-Tarifi, the Palestinian Authority official in charge of civilian affairs. [passage omitted]

The most significant decision made today was permitting Hebron Arabs to reopen their wholesale vegetable market. The market, which is located at the approach to the Jewish Quarter, was closed for security reasons several years ago. This is the first time the army is prepared to allow the Palestinians to use a zone previously closed on security grounds.

[Begin Sarid recording] The Israeli Government has no intention to either expropriate the market or to transfer it to other hands for any other purpose. No Jewish settlement will be established there. There will be no creeping Jewish settlement there; there will be no erosion. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Egypt's al-Baz Arrives With Message From Mubarak

TA2305124195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Usamah al-Baz, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's adviser, arrived in Israel this morning and conferred for about an hour with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and later with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. This has been learned by our political correspondent Shlomo Raz.

Al-Baz brought with him a message from President Mubarak, dealing mainly with Egypt's wish to act toward the continued promotion of the political process. Political circles link al-Baz's visit to the expected drop in tension between Israel and the Arab world following the decision to suspend the expropriation of land in Jerusalem. Al-Baz will return to Egypt this evening.

Discusses Bilateral Ties With Peres

TA2305154595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's senior adviser, Usamah al-Baz, paid a surprise visit to Israel today and held talks with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. Al-Baz said he brought a message from Mubarak on the need to advance in the peace process on all tracks. Peres said Cairo-Jerusalem relations had improved following the government's decision yesterday to suspend the expropriation of land in East Jerusalem. On all of this, David Ze'ev:

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[Begin recording] [Ze'ev] Hoping the expropriation issue is a thing of the past, President Mubarak dispatched his senior adviser Usamah al-Baz to Jerusalem. The call came in the morning; al-Baz was here just a short while later. He met for an hour with Prime Minister Rabin and had lunch with Foreign Minister Peres. He said he brought a message from the Egyptian president, saying the element of time is crucial in moving ahead now with the Palestinians, the Lebanese, and Syrians.

[Al-Baz] We're concentrated on the future, because we want to look forward to a meaningful progress toward peace and meaningful progress toward better relations and a better atmosphere between the two countries and between Israel and the entire Arab world. We hope that the coming few months will witness a greater degree of communication and of consultation between our two countries, our leaders. President Mubarak would like to work closely with the leaders of Israel for and in favor of peace, a comprehensive peace. It is matter of great commitment, moral and political commitment for us to continue to work for peace and to facilitate the process of reaching agreement between Israel and all the Arab parties to it. We will look forward to progress, meaningful progress on the Palestinian track, on the Syrian track, on the Lebanese track in the near future.

[Ze'ev] Foreign Minister Peres said the government's expropriation freeze has already resulted in better relations with Cairo. The foreign minister thanked al-Baz for his visit, saying this is the way to work out differences; with direct contacts, not with threats through the United Nations and the Arab League.

[Peres] I was very glad that he came, though for a very short while. He was able to meet with the prime minister, and myself, to deliver the message. And, I think that we have clarified completely the position of our two countries.

[Ze'ev] At least on the Syrian track, al-Baz said, Egypt was not presenting new ideas, letting the sides work out their differences themselves. Though stressing the element of time, he said a delay by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in visiting the Middle East should not be viewed with alarm. The Egyptian adviser said he hoped the differences with Syria could be resolved in the coming few weeks. [end recording]

Egypt Said Leading Arab 'Crusade' Against Israel

TA2205114595 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 22 May 95 pp 1, 2

[Report by the political correspondent in Jerusalem and ITIM]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jerusalem sources are upset with the role recently fulfilled by the Egyptian authorities in spearheading the Arab world's offensive against Israel. The sources note that Egypt is playing a central role in convening the Arab summit and in the Arab crusade currently waged against Israel in the Jerusalem issue.

It is generally believed that Egypt is making a mistake by allowing itself to be dragged into a confrontation with the United States over both its demand that Israel's nuclear program be supervised and the U.S. veto on the Jerusalem land expropriations issue.

The sources added that the fact that the Middle East is gradually receding in importance on the U.S. foreign agenda, as well as the shaky relations between Washington and Cairo, could cause Mubarak problems in the near future. One of the possibilities mentioned in this context is that the $2.2 billion in economic aid, given to Egypt annually since it signed the peace treaty with Israel in 1979, be significantly reduced. [passage omitted]

Need for Confidence Building With Syria Viewed

TA2105121695 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 21 May 95 p 3

[Report by Drora Perl from Washington]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following his visit to Washington, Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq said Friday that senior U.S. Army officers are showing keen interest in the Syrian issue. Shahaq met with the general in charge of confidence-building measures between Israel and Syria on behalf of the Pentagon.

The chief of staff presented his hosts with Israel's view of the Syrian and Palestinian issues. Israeli sources here estimated that the military talks will not be conducted by the chiefs of staff but at a lower level and that the chiefs of staff meetings will take place when the time for making crucial decisions arrives.

The sources explained that there is a substantial difference between confidence-building measures and security arrangements, although there is a link between them. The confidence-building moves (such as a "hot line" or joint patrols on both sides of the border) are needed to lay the foundations for the trust on which

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peace will be built. Until now, he noted, no such step has been taken between us and the Syrians.

The chiefs of staff meeting last December was positive, the sources said, but the confidence-building measures must be based on continuity. As an example, they presented the custom that was observed for many years of holding morning meetings between Israeli and Jordanian officers at the Allenby Bridge to exchange newspapers. That is not happening at al-Qunaytirah. Security arrangements are much extensive and one of the components is confidence-building relations, which must be prepared through special steps as soon as possible. [passage omitted]

The Israeli sources said that the security concept the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will be called on to accept within the framework of the peace accord with Syria depends on where the border will be located. "The peace package" will be significantly different if the border remains where it is, moves "much further west," or is located somewhere in between. Depending on that and the military threats to be faced, territory has value. Topography, water, territory, and demographics are important, irrespective of whether Israel can allow itself to withdraw from all of the Golan Heights.

The main question, they stressed, concerns the nature of the peace arrangements and the deployment of each side: What are the chances of achieving a situation in which there is no risk of military confrontation? This will become clear during the military talks between the senior officers, who will also discuss the overall concept and the security arrangements.

Rabin To Demand Syria Return Remains of Spy

TA2105191095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 21 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has said that when we reach more practical negotiations with Syria, one of Israel's main demands will be the return of Eli Kohen's remains for burial in Israel. Mr. Rabin spoke at a ceremony marking 30 years to the execution of Eli Kohen in Damascus. Eli Kohen was an Israeli spy who operated in Syria. The ceremony in his memory was held at the intelligence community's memorial in Gelilot. The prime minister said that the government will not compromise on the issue of bringing Eli Kohen's remains back for burial in Israel.

Spokesman Hopes French Remarks on Capital 'Slip'

TA1905163295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 19 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The spokesman of the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem hopes the French Foreign Ministry statement on the Jerusalem issue is a slip of the tongue. The French statement calls on Israel to rescind the land expropriation in the capital and refers to the Government of Israel as the Tel Aviv regime.

Dani Shek, spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, told our political correspondent Shlomo Raz that France has a right not to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, but it is not up to France to decide whether Tel Aviv should be the country's capital.

Rabin to France in 3 Weeks for Meetings With Chirac

TA1905153795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 19 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin will visit Paris in three weeks time to meet French President Jacques Chirac and other new members of the government.

Chirac spoke with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by phone and stressed France's commitment to the peace process and said that the traditional friendship between the two countries would continue.

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King's Letter to Rabin on Land Seizure Detailed

JN2305110695 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 23 May 95 pp 1, 7

[Report by Ayman al-Safadi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Jordan on Monday [22 May] welcomed as "positive'" Israel's suspension of its decision to confiscate Arab land around occupied Jerusalem but said the suspension should be followed by a complete cancellation of the land grab which Israel announced last month.

"The suspension is a positive step in the right direction but it must be followed by a complete cancellation of the decision (to confiscate Arab land around Jerusalem)," Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti told the JORDAN TIMES.

The foreign minister also said the Israeli move should not interfere with plans to hold an Arab mini-summit called for by Morocco over the Jerusalem issue.

Mr. al-Kabariti, said Israel must commit itself not to take any action in the future that could encroach on Arab sovereignty or violate international laws and the treaties the Jewish states signed with the Arab side.

Israel must make this commitment in order not to cause any setbacks to the peace process and in order to "maintain the confidence which is the basis for the success of the peace process," Mr. al-Kabariti said.

Israel suspended the decision to confiscate 53 hectares of Arab land around Jerusalem after the Arab Democratic Party and Hadash parties submitted motions of no confidence in the government over the land confiscation.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres announced the suspension of the land grab in the Israeli parliament shortly before a vote on the non-confidence bid was to start. He said a ministerial committee headed by Prime Minister Yizhaq Rabin will look into the confiscation.

The no-confidence motion was defeated.

The suspension of the confiscation also came two days after His majesty King Husayn sent Mr. Rabin a letter over the Jerusalem land issue.

The Jordan News Agency, PETRA, said the King urged Mr. Rabin in the letter to reconsider the confiscation decision saying that the land grab will hinder the peace process and shake people's confidence in the future of peace.

PETRA said King Husayn reaffirmed the importance of Jerusalem for Jordanians and other Arabs and Muslims, "expressing hope that negotiations over Jerusalem would take place in accordance with the provisions of Israeli-Palestinian agreements."

The King also stressed that the Madrid peace conference was based on international legitimacy which stipulates that Jerusalem is an occupied Arab land, PETRA said.

The agency also said that the King told Mr. Rabin in the letter that Jordan will continue to help the Palestinians regain their legitimate rights.

Agence France-Presse Monday quoted a report by an Israeli newspaper that the King told Mr. Rabin in the letter that the land confiscation has put the government in a "very difficult position."

It said the letter underlined the strength of the opposition in the country and parliament after the expropriation of the Jerusalem land.

Informed sources said Jordan launched a "strong diplomatic offensive in Israel" to bring about a reversal of the land confiscation, which, observers said, has given parties opposed to the normalisation of ties with Israel added ammunition with which to push for their anti-normalisation agenda.

The sources said Jordan's ambassador to Israel Marwan al- Mu'ashshir, who on Sunday met with Mr. Peres over the Jerusalem issue, delivered a number of messages to Israeli officials outlining Jordan's position on the land grab. Jordan has rejected the confiscation, saying it would have a very negative impact on the peace process.

Jordanian parties and parliamentarians were outraged by the decision which provoked calls from 11 opposition parties to freeze all steps towards further normalisation of ties with the Jewish state, expelling the Israeli ambassador in Amman and recalling Jordan's ambassador to Israel.

An informal meeting of the Lower House of Parliament, which was held over the issue, also condemned the move and urged concerted effort to reverse it.

House speaker Sa'd Hayil al-Surur said that the suspension of the land grab must be followed by a decision to cancel the confiscation.

He said he will not consider the move "positive" unless it leads to a complete cancellation of the land confiscation which he said outraged all segments of the Jordanian society.

"If the Israeli side is concerned over the peace process, it must cancel the land grab," said Mr. al-Surur, who expressed concern that the suspension decision might be aimed at diluting the Arab and international anger that the land confiscation provoked.

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"We have got used to Israeli practices that are aimed at diluting the anger provoked by its acts," Mr. al-Surur told the JORDAN TIMES.

He said the Israeli government has to prove that it has the will to make and build peace in the region.

Opposition parties as well as mainstream groups also lashed at the United States for vetoing a draft Security Council resolution abrogating the land grab.

Moroccan King Hassan II, who heads a Jerusalem committee of the Islamic Conference Organisation, called for a mini-Arab summit over the land grab and his envoys were Monday still touring the area to invite the Arab heads of state to the gathering, which would be the first such meeting of its kind since 1990.

Mr. al-Kabariti told the JORDAN TIMES the Israeli suspension of the decision to confiscate the Jerusalem land should not halt plans to hold the mini-summit.

"I do not think they (the Israeli decision and the holding of the summit) should conflict because the basic idea behind the summit is still there," he said.

"We should pursue any Arab meeting because the basic idea of the summit is to rebuild a unified Arab stand that will make Arab diplomacy effective in serving national Arab interest. The need for that is still there," Mr. al-Kabariti told the JORDAN TIMES.

'Arafat Arrives in Amman for Brief Visit
King Welcomes 'Arafat

JN2305145795 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn has expressed hope that an Arab summit will be held in the near future in order to close the Arab ranks and turn a new page.

In a statement to journalists after welcoming Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian Authority, who has arrived in Amman, his majesty added that for us, Jerusalem has a special status. He voiced satisfaction with Israel's suspension of the decision to expropriate lands in Jerusalem.

His majesty pointed out that the expropriation decision conflicts with both the Oslo agreement and the Declaration of Principles signed by the Palestinian and Israeli sides in Washington and creates many difficulties for the peace process.

'Arafat was also welcomed by His Excellency al-Sharif Zayd Bin- Shakir, the prime minister; Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Royal Hashemite Court; Muhammad Rasul al-Kilani, adviser to his majesty the king; 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, deputy prime minister and education minister; Salamah Hammad, minister of interior; Ahmad Quray', official in charge of economy in the Palestinian National Authority; and 'Umar al-Khatib, Palestinian charge d'affaires in Amman.

King, 'Arafat Speak to Correspondents

JN2305164795 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn has led those who welcomed His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat on his arrival in Amman this afternoon on a brief visit to the Kingdom. [passage omitted]

His Majesty and President 'Arafat expressed pleasure for this meeting which serves the higher interests of both fraternal peoples and the Arab nation.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent, in English] Let me ask you if you had any assurances from the Israeli Government that they will now wait until the final talks before attempting to change the status of Jerusalem in any way?

[King Husayn, in English] I believe that this is the case, and it has been a very courageous, timely, statesman's-like decision that was taken [word indistinct] despite difficulties.

[Correspondent, in English] Have you offered you assurances that they will not take any such unilateral actions in the future?

[Husayn, in English] I believe this is the case right now.

[Correspondent, in English] Does it make it difficult for leaders such as yourself — peacemakers, such as yourselves — to make peace when the Israelis initiate such actions?

[Husayn, in English] Well, fortunately it has been stopped, and the actions have been stopped at a time when they could have really caused serious difficulty for the peace camp and all who belonged to it.

Jerusalem is very, very special to all of us, and obviously a short of a final resolution of the problem between our Palestinian brothers and the Israelis as included in the Oslo agreements and the Washington DOP [Declaration of Principles], I believe that it will remain to be a problem that is there. I hope that their efforts will succeed with all our support and all our help, and then Jerusalem can become the essence of peace.

[Correspondent] Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], what is the importance of your meeting with the king at this particular time?

['Arafat] You know that I am visiting my homeland and people, led by the king. The Palestinian and Jordanian

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peoples, and the Arab nation have all love for his majesty the king.

[Correspondent] What does Abu-'Ammar have to say about Israel's decision suspending the confiscation of lands? Is this sufficient?

['Arafat] I hope that this issue will continue so that we will be able to continue the peace process with all strength.

[Correspondent] What do you expect regarding the mini-summit — will there be a summit?

['Arafat] We agreed to suspend it.

[Husayn] Your Excellency, Brother, this is the real state of affairs. I believe, you and me hope that a summit will be held in the near future to close Arab ranks, to forget the past, and to make a new and good start. We will all seek to achieve this.

[Correspondent] Sir, how do you assess the Jordanian-Palestinian relations at this stage?

[Husayn] They are fraternal relations. [laughing]

['Arafat, interrupting] We should not say relations, but strong and firm ties among members of the one Palestinian-Jordanian family.

[Husayn] I would like to emphasize in this regard and within this context that brother Abu-'Ammar is the president of this good fraternal people. He is the president of the sole party which represents this people. We only recognize him and the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people. Any other speculations or suspicions are baseless. Anyone who works against you shall not have place on this land.

['Arafat, interrupting] May God bless your majesty.

[Correspondent, in English] Your Majesty, could you please tell us about this trip and the relevance of it?

[Husayn, in English] I believe it is a very very important trip at an important time, and all the meetings we've had in the past have been constructive. I hope that with all the experience that we have had so far, this one will be a productive one and a fruitful one in terms of what I believe will fulfill our hopes and aspirations.

[Correspondent, in English] The future of Jordanian-Palestinian relationships, how would you like to see them?

[Husayn, in English] That belongs to the people, and I believe that they are a family. I hope that at the right time, under conditions of freedom, people can work together exactly what there should be in the times ahead. [end recording]

King, 'Arafat Hold Closed Meeting

JN2405064695 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn and His Excellency Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], met at the al-Hashimiyah Palace last night. They held a closed meeting for some time which was followed by an expanded meeting attended by senior officials from both sides.

During the meeting, the two sides' latest developments in the peace process were discussed. His Majesty King Husayn reiterated Jordan's stand in support of the Palestinian people and the PLO, their sole and legitimate representative, so that the Palestinian people can attain their legitimate rights on their national soil within the framework of achieving a comprehensive, lasting, and just peace in the region. His majesty also expressed Jordan's support for the PNA's efforts to achieve the aspirations of the Palestinian people in terms of progress, development, and independence.

For his part, President 'Arafat expressed his and the Palestinian people's appreciation for the Jordanian principled and constant stand in support of Palestinian rights. He also thanked His Majesty King Husayn and the Jordanian Government for the Jordanian principled stand on the Jerusalem issue, for the concern for Arab and Islamic rights in it, and for preventing the confiscation of any part of its territories.

The two sides also discussed bilateral relations within the framework of brotherhood and interest in cooperation in all fields to serve the well being of both fraternal peoples. [passage omitted]

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Radio Calls Israeli Land Suspension 'Maneuver'

JN2305141895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 23 May 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The Israeli Government has suspended, but not cancelled, its decision to expropriate Arab land in occupied Jerusalem. It referred the issue to a ministerial committee, chaired by Rabin. This measure was not taken to save the peace process, which is likely to collapse. It is an exposed attempt to ease the anger of the Arab public and contain the protests of the world community. This is especially true, since the expropriation decision has created a crisis for the Israeli Government coalition. This decision has also put the advocates of normalization with Israel in an extremely embarrassing situation. This is because the decision has given concrete evidence that the Tel Aviv rulers take the issue of peace very lightly and deal with it in a very arrogant manner. They do not hesitate to take measures that totally conflict with the principles and objectives of peace.

The wave of protests against the decision to expropriate Arab land has included almost all sectors of the international community. The European Union, Russia, China, and the nonaligned states have deplored this measure, saying it contradicts and undermines the peace process. The U.S. veto complicated things further and cast a shadow over the role of the honest partner and faithful sponsor, to which the United States has committed itself.

The expropriation decision has created such a clamor because it seriously threatened the future of the peace process and shed light on the reality of Israeli thinking. Since the peace initiative was launched, Syria has repeatedly warned of the policy of separate deals. It also emphasized the need to achieve a just and comprehensive peace and find a real solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Security Council resolutions and the UN Charter and principles.

Throughout the talks, Syria has exposed Israel's ploys and the obstacles Israel has been placing in the way of a just and comprehensive peace. Israel has rejected all serious methods to address the conflict, including the proposals made by Syria, which could usher in peace and stability in the region. Israel has also insisted on dealing with the Arab parties through blackmail and one at a time. This is as if peace were a trade deal, and not a most noble objective.

Thus, the Oslo agreement was a fruit of this twisted policy. This agreement did not bring the region any closer to peace. It made the situation in the occupied territories more complicated and explosive. Israel used this unfair agreement to build and expand settlements, seize more land, and adopt a very intransigent stand toward the Syrian and Lebanese peace tracks.

It has become clear to everybody that Israel does not deal with the issue of peace seriously, responsibly, and honestly. It is using the peace process to blackmail U.S. aid and mislead the world public. Had Israel dealt honestly with the peace process and responded to its principles, peace would now have been a concrete reality in the Middle East.

The pressing question here: Having reversed its decision to expropriate Arab land, has Israel realized that it is going in an opposite direction of peace, its values, and objectives. Have the Israeli rulers realized that peace and occupation are irreconcilable, and that withdrawing the Israeli forces from all the occupied Arab territories to the 4 June 1967 lines alone can open the doors of peace?

The truth is that the decision to suspend the land expropriation is probably no more than a maneuver in a series of maneuvers adopted by Israel to circumvent a just and comprehensive peace. Future developments on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks will reveal the truth of Israeli policy, since these are the two major tracks in the peace process.

'Informed Sources' Discuss Possible Regional War

MM2405080995 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 May 95 p 3

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Damascus Accuses Israel of Preparing To Launch War Against Syria and Lebanon"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus — According to informed diplomatic sources in Damascus, Israel is leaning towards waging war on Syria and Lebanon to create a new reality for the peace process. The sources stressed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that an indication of this is the U.S. alignment with Israel, a matter which has increased Israel's intransigence to the peace process, and the expropriation of Arab land in Jerusalem and elsewhere, denoting a serious turning point in the work for peace in the region.

Informed sources in Damascus had earlier said that Syria had turned to the European Union states, informing them of the Israeli position and the U.S. support for it and calling on these states to put pressure on Israel to make it abide by the just and lasting peace principles acknowledged by the world. The sources quoted some Syrian officials as saying that the peace process is facing a serious change denoting an American retreat from

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the previous commitment to work for a just and lasting peace. Syria was stunned by the recent stance taken by the U.S. Administration.

Syria had confirmed the failure of the talks held by its Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' with the U.S. President and his Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Washington, and it attributed that failure to the U.S. position of total support for the Israeli ideas and proposals taken to Washington recently by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin on withdrawal from the Golan and security arrangements.

The sources believe that Syria no longer pins any hopes on the United States to boost the peace process since the positions taken by Washington reflect partiality to Israel and adoption of the Israeli views carried by Rabin to Washington, seen by Syria as new obstacles on the road to peace.

A senior Syrian official has stated that what Syria got from the U.S. President and his secretary of state was a purely Israeli position on the security arrangements, the demilitarized zones, and related factors such as Israel's answer to Syria, rejected as a matter of principle because it did not meet the minimum requirements for the peace process and sought to contravene the declared constant Syrian principles which form the foundation of a just and comprehensive peace.

The Syrian official added that the way the Israeli ideas and demands were conveyed made it appear as if they were adopted by the U.S. Administration, fully supporting the Israeli viewpoint without any particular attempt to establish balance and equality on both sides of the 4 June lines, which has been a major Syrian condition since the start of the peace process.

He said that the U.S. position came as a shocking surprise to Syria because it did not have any of the specific elements of peace, and that cast an air of pessimism over President Clinton's meeting with al-Shar'. That is in addition to the U.S. veto against the UN draft resolution condemning Israel's expropriation of Arab land in Jerusalem, enabling Israel to be rebellious against the Arabs and the world. The sources said that Israel's rejection of the principle of balance and equality of security arrangements on both sides of the lines with Syria means that Israel rejects peace and is concealing completely opposite intentions.

Informed diplomatic sources speak of information that Israel is preparing to expand again. The sources do not rule out the possibility of a war between Syria and Lebanon on one side and Israel on the other to create a new geopolitical reality under which the peace process would again be considered. Citing reports received by their government, the sources say that the war could spread to the hinterland, meaning attacks on the infrastructures of capitals to create a situation that would transform the course of the peace process into a fait accompli and bring about new resolutions because Israel believes that all the UN and Security Council resolutions and the European and international support for them created borders for Israel and made Syria insist on them in the interest of its security and the recovery of its territory.

The diplomatic sources also did not rule out the possibility of Israel intensifying and expanding its attacks on Lebanon to pave the way for that war. That possibility was discussed during a meeting between Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam in Damascus the day before yesterday.

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India

Minister Mukherjee Visits U.S., Holds Talks

Agenda Detailed

BK1905163095 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1459 GMT 19 May 95

["Press Release" — ISI headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The external affairs minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee will visit the US from May 21 to 27, 1995. The visit is part of the intensified high-level dialogue that was initiated after PM's [prime minister's] visit to the US in 1994. Since then four cabinet level US officials have visited India, apart from several other senior officials, congressmen and others.

2. [Numbering as received] At Washington, external affairs minister will be meeting US Secretary of State Warren Christopher who will host a working lunch for him. External affairs minister will also have discussions with the national security adviser, Anthony Lake, and Deputy Secretary in the State Department Strobe Talbott. Shri Mukherjee is scheduled to meet a number of prominent US senators and congressmen, including chairmen of principal committee and sub-committees, as well as members of the Congressional India Caucus. Several meetings for external affairs minister are scheduled with the US media, think tanks, academic institutions and Indian community associations. He will address the Heritage Foundation at Washington and the Councils on Foreign Relations at New York and Chicago. At New York, external affairs minister will call on the UN secretary general.

3. The discussions with US officials are expected to focus on further strengthening and diversifying bilateral relations as well as to cover a wide range of regional and international issues of mutual interest. The external affairs minister will be accompanied by Foreign Secretary Salman Haider and Joint Secretary Dilip Lahiri.

New Delhi

19 May 1995

Mukherjee Views Kashmir, NPT, Prithvi

BK2405040395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Clinton administration has made it clear that the U.S. considers Kashmir a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan to be resolved by them through a constructive dialogue. Speaking to newsmen in Washington before his meeting with the external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, the American secretary of state, Mr. Warren Christopher, said the United States does not want to be involved in the dispute. Referring to the steps taken by India to normalize the situation in Kashmir, he said Washington is encouraged by these steps. Mr. Mukherjee, who was present, made it clear that Kashmir is an integral part of India and the government would find a solution to the issue within the framework of the Constitution in consultation with the Kashmiri leaders and others concerned. He ruled out the possibility of a war between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

Asked about the differences between the two countries on the issue of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Mr. Mukherjee said it is not necessary for them to agree on all issues. He asserted India's stand that the treaty is faulty and discriminatory. Mr. Mukherjee said India favors a global nondiscriminatory nonproliferation regime as spelt out by the late prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, at the UN in 1985.

Asked about India's reported decision to deploy surface-to- surface Prithvi missile, he said the question is closely related with our threat perception. Before his meeting with Mr. Warren Christopher, Mr. Mukherjee had a series of meetings with senior U.S. officials, including the national security adviser, Mr. Anthony Lake.

U.S. Assurances on Pakistan Viewed

BK2405050095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 May 95

[Commentary by Sabita Pandey]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The reassurance given by the United States to the visiting Indian external affairs minister that Washington will not supply F-16 planes to Pakistan needs to be looked into in the context of the wider background. This is more so because it comes close on the heels of the assurance given by the American president to the Pakistani prime minister that the issue would be resolved soon. Ms. Benazir Bhutto had paid a visit to the U.S. mainly with the objective of seeking the release of F-16's which have been held back in terms of the Pressler Amendment under which aid to Pakistan has been cut off for pursuing a nuclear weapons program. Mr. Clinton had admitted at a press conference that it was not right for his country to keep the money as well as the planes.

The Pakistan-specific Pressler Amendment, named after its author Larry Pressler, first took effect in 1990 when President George Bush determined that Pakistan had attained nuclear capability. His action halted annual U.S. aid of $600 million and prevented Pakistan from obtaining the remaining 28 F-16's. While on the one hand, Pakistan is putting pressure on the United States to

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keep its commitment and supply the planes, it is looking for alternatives like SU-27 from Russia or Mirage-2000 from France.

The United States is in a catch-22 situation. While it cannot waive the Pressler Amendment as that might be interpreted both at home and abroad as going soft on the proliferation issue, it cannot return the money, since it has already been given to the sellers, Lockheed, who in turn have supplied the planes. The planes are right now stored in Arizona. According to the American secretary for defense, William Perry, attempts to sell these, now three and half year-old planes, to a third party have not succeeded. The talk of getting a one-time waiver to facilitate release of these planes did not gain momentum either. For it entailed an acceptance by Pakistan of verification by the U.S. of the so-called capping of its nuclear program as a quid pro quo. In any case, a one-time waiver also entails the problem of maintenance. Easing of sanctions by the Foreign Relations Committee does not affect F-16 transfer since the ban on arms transfer remains. It is, however, in conformity with Mr. William Perry's attempt to build military-to-military relationship between the United States and South Asia.

The F-16's are highly sophisticated planes with on-board avionics, on-board radars, and highly sophisticated guidance system, having a large range and high degree of delivery accuracy. The Acquisition by Pakistan of the additional force will change the balance of air power in the region. To that extent, the Indian fears are valid. And if the U.S. assurance is genuine, it will go a long way in promoting Indo-U.S. relations.

Israeli Paper Alleges Indo-Iran Nuclear Ties

TA2105101795 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 21 May 95 p 3

[Report by Ben Kaspit, Hemi Shalev, and our correspondent in London]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Not only Russians are involved in Tehran's nuclear program. Information has recently reached Jerusalem indicating that India is also cooperating with Iran in developing the latter's nuclear capability. A report sent by the Israeli Embassy in New Delhi states that India and Iran have agreed on an accelerated plan to step up cooperation in the fields of research and development and that India has also sent nuclear experts to Iran. [passage omitted]

Embassy Official Refutes Allegations on Shrine

BK2405034695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has again refuted Pakistani allegations of the involvement of Indian security forces in the destruction of the Charar Sharif. The Indian deputy high commissioner in Islamabad, Mr. (Francis Baz), categorically told the Pakistani authorities that New Delhi has information and concrete evidence of the torching of the shrine by the mercenaries supported from across the border. Mr. (Baz) rejected the allegations as unwarranted and tendentious. Mr. (Baz) reminded the Pakistani Foreign Office of the statements of the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, and the external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, expressing India's desire to resolve all outstanding issues with Pakistan, including Kashmir, bilaterally and peacefully.

Official Escapes Assassination Attempt in Kashmir

BK2305162195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil, has asked the government to make a statement within three days on how it proposes to deal with the rehabilitation in Charar Sharif, including rebuilding of houses speedily.

Earlier, members in the Lok Sabha unanimously urged the government to take up rebuilding of burnt houses on a war footing. Raising the issue during the zero hour, Mr. Rabi Ray, Samata Party, and other members of the parliamentary delegation to Charar Sharif said this will send the message to the people of the state that the government is concerned about their difficulties.

The Jammu and Kashmir Government has launched a massive operation to provide relief to the fire victims of Charar Sharif town. A cash relief of 75 lakh rupees has been disbursed till today. A high- level committee is constantly monitoring day-to-day progress of the relief operations.

Meanwhile, the pradesh [state] Congress-I chief, Mr. Ghulam Rasul Kar, today escaped an attempt on his life when he was attacked by some antinational elements while on his way back from Charar Sharif town. Later, addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Mr. Kar said that he had gone to Charar Sharif to express his solidarity with the fire victims.

Atmosphere 'Conducive' to Elections in Kashmir

BK2405094195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several measures, including the release of detenus [detainees], in Jammu and Kashmir have strengthened the atmosphere for conducting elections in the state. The minister of state in the prime minister's office, Mr. Bhuvanesh Chaturvedi, informed the members of the Lok Sabha today that efforts have

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also been made to restore democratic and representative institutions conducive to this objective. In a written reply, he said the pace of development and economic activities have been stepped up to strengthen the peace process through confidence building measures. He said the government is also holding consultations with leaders of various political parties.

The Rajya Sabha today severely condemned yesterday's attack on Mr. Ghulam Rasul Kar in Charar town of Jammu and Kashmir. When the issue was raised by Mr. Syed Sibte Razi, Congress-I, the entire house, including the vice chairman, joined him to condemn the incident. Members urged the government to immediately take steps for reconstruction of Charar Sharif shrine and the houses in the town. They also wanted the government to counter the false propaganda initiated by Pakistan on Charar incident. Some of the members who had visited Charar Sharif as a part of the parliamentary delegation last Saturday [20 May] said that people there have requested them to take up their cause in Parliament. They said the people of Kashmir have expressed full faith in the parliamentary system of the country.

Iran

U.S. 'Rumors' on Threats to Gulf Shipping Rejected

LD2305122795 Tehran IRNA in English 1151 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 23, IRNA — General Headquarters of Iranian Armed Forces said here on Tuesday [23 May] that security prevails over navigation in northern sector of the Persian Gulf and there is no threat to any vessel moving in Iranian territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The headquarters rejected rumors mounted by the U.S. officials on possible interception by Iranian gunboats and causing inconvenience for the ships passing through the Persian Gulf.

The headquarters of the armed forces said the U.S. spreads rumors intentionally to create an atmosphere of insecurity in the sensitive region of the Persian Gulf.

Daily Attacks U.S. Fabrication of Nuclear 'Danger'

NC2005114295 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 14 May 95 p 16

[Commentary by Morteza Qadiri: "The Extremely Extremist Clamor of the United States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] which was approved and implemented in 1970 has been renewed after a reappraisal and ratification by 178 countries. In a historical decision they concurred that the NPT should be extended indefinitely. Iran, which has consistently stressed that all countries should sign the NPT, accepted this indefinite extension along with the other peace-loving countries of the world. It emphasized that it would unequivocally support the observance by all signatories of this convention [preceding word in English] without exception of its provisions on the proliferation, research, production, and peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. (footnote: Address by the Iranian delegate to NPT conference in New York)

Iran stresses that the pledges to facilitate collaboration on all peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be implemented in full. The system for controlling nuclear materials cannot be the prerogative of a limited group. It would be appropriate if all interested governments could participate in formulating the rules for controlling these exports.

Klaus Kinkel, the German foreign minister, described the indefinite extension of the NPT as amazing. He said: If the countries that are able to produce nuclear weapons refrain from doing so, this in itself constitutes a step toward the denuclearization of the world.

So can we truly believe that this NPT encompasses the entire world? Will the document approved at New York be enforced? About 178 countries have accepted the NPT and signed it. This is eloquent testimony to the desire of the big powers, including the United States, that the indefinite extension be adequately supported, but some of the prominent members are still unconvinced. While announcing their support for this indefinite extension, they stated their concern that without universal commitment to its complete implementation, the NPT is in serious danger—which is a fact. The discussion and airing of opinions on the NPT by delegates of various countries attracted worldwide attention as a momentous political event, but not to the extent that it raised any protests or that there was any misleading political propaganda to overshadow the logical and methodical course of the debates and speeches. In fact, one can say that there was no evidence of overt blackmail or clamor. However, along with these deliberations there was another development replete with many arcane and secret factors. This sensational development caused a fuss and made Iran the focus of the hottest and most sensational political news of the world—a controversy that continues to rage in the political and economic circles of the world. That is the economic embargo on Iran based on the pretext of the completion of the Bushehr nuclear energy power plant.

The United States raised an unprecedented clamor by saying that Iran is seeking to gain access to nuclear capability. The extent of the baseless and illogical

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propaganda by the White House chiefs, especially Warren Christopher—who called on all to be hostile to Iran—was so great that a British publication, the MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC SURVEY, expressed great surprise, stating: The Iranians are seeing their country being given the kind of attention that is usually reserved by Washington for a superpower of its own ilk!

However, the net result of this totally unreasonable and illogical policy was an unsurpassed defeat for the U.S. President, as not a single strong voice was heard in support anywhere in the world except for Israel, which only added to the humiliation of the pro-Israeli U.S. politicians.

The European countries adopted a realistic stance and were not prepared to accept the politics dictated by the United States or to link their interests with U.S. interests. Most countries, especially U.S. allies, said that they do not believe the White House's claims, and many stressed that there is no evidence to prove Iran is trying to produce nuclear weapons or support terrorism. In Moscow, after four hours of confidential talks, Clinton could not convince Yeltsin to reverse the cooperation agreement with Iran. Probably Yeltsin himself is convinced that Iran is not seeking to produce nuclear weapons.

Subsequently, Viktor Mikhaylev, the Russian nuclear energy minister, stressed that there would be no change in the agreement on nuclear cooperation between Iran and Russia and expressed his confidence in Iran's adherence to international regulations. He said that Clinton's six-page letter to Yeltsin regarding Iran's efforts to gain access to nuclear weapons cannot prove Washington's claims.

The Russian nuclear energy minister stated with complete assurance that Moscow will adhere to all its commitments to Iran on the uses of nuclear energy. The Russian president especially stressed the Iran-Russia agreement will be implemented. (footnote: This was stated at his meeting with Iranian ambassador Mehdi Safari in Moscow)

Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev stressed that the U.S.-Russian summit meeting in Moscow has not changed Russia's stance and that Moscow continues to adhere to the NPT.

Clinton's defeat by Moscow's firm determination to continue cooperation with Iran was widely reflected in political and news circles. American officials construed it as a defeat and source of humiliation for Washington.

The chairman of the Senate Budget Committee deemed Clinton's visit to Moscow an embarrassment to the U.S. Administration. IZVESTIYA commented: Clinton left Moscow with only the gift sword that Yeltsin presented to him.

The prime ministers of Canada and Britain supported the Kremlin's stance on Iran and reminded Yeltsin in separate meetings that the U.S. fuss about nuclear cooperation with Iran is very extreme.

It seems that this outcry is gradually subsiding because its main objective has been achieved. Criticism of Clinton's foreign policy has greatly increased in the United States, providing grist for the Republican election campaign even though Clinton still says: What I have done is correct.

One can infer from Clinton's remarks that he believes what Yeltsin told him. He said: "Yeltsin sincerely believes that light water nuclear reactors are not capable of producing nuclear weapons even if a country wanted to." (footnote: AFP report)

Is such a remark not a tacit admission? Does Clinton not wish to show the Republicans that the charges against Iran are merely to support Israel? After the historic decision by the countries of the world on indefinitely extending the NPT, Israel openly and without attempting to conceal its joy expressed its satisfaction and sent a message of gratitude to the U.S. President for protecting Israel despite pressure from the Arab and Islamic countries.

The Israeli officials stated quite openly that the extension of the NPT has strengthened Israel's stance. (footnote: AFP report from Nicosia) It is because of this that the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] said: "Each time the subject of reappraising or extending the NPT arises, the Americans raise a clamor in order to support Israel and to act as a smokescreen for it."

However, Clinton's sole protege, whom no one believes, continues to allege threats from Iran to justify Clinton's overt ploy and to disguise its own arsenal of 100 to 200 nuclear warheads. that was why Shim'on Peres recently said: "Tel Aviv will prevent Iran from producing nuclear weapons." (footnote: Radio Israel)

No one in the world would be deceived by such games. The Middle Eastern countries are aware of this very real danger, as shown by the debates in New York. The Iranian delegate stated: The NPT has become universal. Israel's nuclear threat in the Middle East should be dealt with." (footnote: Speech by Iranian delegate in New York)

The Syrian delegate emphasized that his country had joined the NPT 25 years ago and has respected it, but

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it cannot agree to Israel not being a signatory... Israel's nuclear weapons threaten the peace and stability of the Middle East.

Jordanian Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti also asserted that no one should be exempted from the NPT. Even Yasir 'Arafat, who has extended the hand of cooperation to Israel, is apprehensive of the future. He is quoted as having said: The United States has coerced 170 countries of the world, especially the Arabs, to sign a document they are not pleased with. He expressed concern that the Middle East peace process is in danger. (footnote: AFP from Nicosia)

This is how these two important political phenomena converge at a certain point like two intersecting lines. It can thus be clearly seen why when the NPT was being reexamined for extension the "extremely extremist clamor" against Iran was raised by the United States.

In these sensitive days, the United States has sought to divert the attention of world public opinion from Israel's nuclear arsenal by deceitfully fabricating a fictional, nonexistent danger and using it for blackmail. All this yielded was a loss of credibility for the United States, to the extent that, like the fate of the boy who cried "wolf," no one will believe U.S. officials in future.

'Zionist' Regime Said Bowing to World Pressure

LD2205190895 Tehran IRNA in English 1826 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, May 22, IRNA — International outrage forced the illegal state of Israel Monday [22 May] to suspend its decision to confiscate Arab lands in occupied al-Quds [Jerusalem].

The surprise decision was announced following a meeting of the Zionist regime's cabinet in the aftermath of world condemnation of the recent confiscation of 131 acres of more Arab lands in the holy Islamic city of al-Quds.

Palestinian analysts in al-Quds said Zionist Premier Yitzhaq Rabin took the decision after two Arab parties in the 'Knesset' - the so-called parliament of the Zionist state - threatened to withdraw their support from his regime.

The Arab Democratic Party and the Arab Democratic Front for Peace and Equality said they would now reconsider their no-confidence move.

However, what remains unclear till now is whether the decision means a general review of the Zionist regime's policy of grabbing more Arab lands, or just a temporary maneuver to let the international anger die out.

The Israeli decision to confiscate Arab lands not only outraged the whole Muslim world, but also drew strong condemnation from the European Union and other countries of the world.

It is also not clear if the Zionist regime will repeal its decision to confiscate 131 acres of Arab lands in al-Quds, or just delay its implementation.

Earlier, a meeting between PLO-Chairman Yasir 'Arafat and the Foreign Minister of the Zionist regime Shim'on Peres in Gaza ended indecisively as the two men failed to resolve any of the outstanding issues impeding further progress in the PLO-Israeli peace talks.

Commentary Views Suspension Decision

LD2305151395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0956 GMT 23 May 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] As Arab countries prepare to hold a meeting to discuss the issue of the expropriation of land in east Jerusalem, and as the waves of opposition to Israel have intensified because of its expansionist policies, Yitzhaq Rabin, the prime minister of the Zionist regime, has announced that he is halting the confiscation of land in east Jerusalem.

Rabin's announcement has evoked different reactions and led to a variety of analyses. Some people see it as the result of the reaction shown by Islamic countries against the steps taken by Israel. Others consider it to be a short-term measure aimed at reducing criticism from domestic Israeli groups.

Political analysts are of the opinion that Rabin's decision must be seen as a retreat brought about by the pressure resulting from the unity shown by Islamic countries. In the wake of Israel's expropriation of 53 hectares of land in east Jerusalem, Muslim countries reacted in a unified manner, mobilizing international public opinion against Israel.

At the request of Arab countries, the UN Security Council convened a meeting to embark on a serious response to Israel's expansionist acts. Although the UN Security Council was prevented from adopting a decision because of the U.S. veto, the speeches made at the meeting and the international reaction shown toward the U.S. veto demonstrated that Israel and its ally, the United States, have been placed in a very weak position.

On the other hand, in a coordinated measure, the Arab League Jerusalem Committee laid the groundwork to convene a meeting in Morocco — due to be held in a few days time. By holding this meeting, Arab League

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countries are trying to adopt and implement coordinated policies to confront Israel's expansionism. This action by the Arab countries means that Israel has come under pressure as the cause of tension and trouble in the region.

It was for this reason that, to foil the negative reaction shown to its expansionist actions, Israel announced this policy. On the other hand, by announcing this policy, the prime minister of the Zionist regime is trying to create divisions among the Muslim countries, and especially Arab countries, which adopted a unified stance after the confiscation of land in east Jerusalem — thereby preventing the adoption of a definite decision at the meeting of the Jerusalem Committee.

Israel is an aggressive and expansionist regime which is striving to capture as much land belonging to Muslims as possible and, to consolidate its position to the greatest possible extent toward this end, it has put the policy of settlement-building on its agenda on an extensive scale. The actions which can thwart this regime are unity and coordination between Islamic countries. It is, therefore, necessary for Islamic countries to understand their own strong position and to adopt a stance in response to Israel's tactical and short-term postures, to powerfully force that regime to retreat from its positions.

Foreign Ministry Denies Report on Iraqi Sanctions

LD2405085495 Tehran IRNA in English
0654 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 24, IRNA — The Iranian Foreign Ministry Wednesday [24 May] denied allegations raised by an American news agency regarding Iran's opposition with the lifting of the international embargo on Iraq.

The UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL (UPI), in a dispatch Tuesday, made the claim quoting an unknown Iranian official.

Further quoting the fabricated source as a senior Iranian official, UPI said, "ties between the two old foes cannot be fully normalized as long as Iraqi leader Saddam Husayn remains in power."

An informed source at the Iranian Foreign Ministry Wednesday said that no Iranian official had made any interview in this connection.

He added that the statements attributed to an Iranian official are "thoroughly baseless."

Daily: Grounds Exist for Cooperation With Iraq

LD2405103095 Tehran IRNA in English
0719 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 24, IRNA — A morning daily here Wednesday [24 May] editorialized on the visit of an Iranian delegation to Iraq and suggested that the Iraqi regime listen to the Iranian voice of reason and act in a practical manner in seven years after the end of the war, when both nations would benefit far greater from an exchange of resources rather than a trade of accusations.

Pointing out that new talks aimed at improving ties and preparing ground for a pending visit by Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati to Baghdad, IRAN NEWS wrote that despite the fact that both countries share somewhat a common culture, religion and tradition, their diplomatic relations remained strained since the termination of the Iraqi-imposed war, seven years ago.

It believed, "The most significant obstacle, however, is a mutual lack of confidence which aggreviates the already tense atmosphere that exists for the development of stronger Tehran-Baghdad ties," and said that the repatriation of prisoners of war is one of the major factors that had continued to strain the relations and that Iraq's unwillingness to return Iranian POWs had consistently added to the breakdown of the path towards better ties.

"The Islamic Republic has already freed a large number of its POWs and returned them to their homeland, and has announced its readiness to free remaining Iraqi prisoners on the condition that Baghdad follow suit. However, Iraq has consistently dodged the option, prolonging this humanitarian issue far longer than any political maneuvering or military bargaining may merit," it added.

"In addition, Iran has formally announced the number of its POWs and has upheld its claim to this accurate amount throughout. Baghdad, on the other hand, vacillates constantly, never disclosing the accurate number, nor the status, of Iranian POWs it still detained on its soil," wrote the article.

The daily further referred to the large number of Iraqi Shitte Muslims and the country's being home to the shrine of two Shitte imams, adding that the Iraqi regime had deprived the Muslims of Iran of preforming this religious rite which is regarded by many Iranians a violation, not only of their religious, but also of their human rights.

It also remarked, "In today's world, a unified Iran and Iraq may play a vital role in maintaining peace

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and security in the region. Iran has repeatedly stated that all eight littoral states surrounding the Persian Gulf are responsible for the region's security, and not just the six states that currently belong to the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC). The PGCC has repeatedly proposed membership to Iran, but Iran consistently refuses on the grounds that Iraq must also be included."

The editorial further said, "As the most recent attempt at Muslim unity and regional stability, the current visit of the Iranian delegation to Baghdad represents a "golden opportunity". Iraq may seize this opportunity to join hands with Iran in recognition of the mutual interest served by a just peace between the two nations."

IRAN NEWS concluded by saying, "The ball is now in Iraq's court, as the saying goes. Perhaps the regime in Baghdad will finally recognize that this coalition can also serve as an effective means through which Iraq may finally begin to work through the limitations imposed there-upon in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war."

German Official Holds Talks With Velayati

LD2205205895 Tehran IRNA in English 2044 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 23, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati here Monday [22 May] reviewed Iran-Germany relations with the parliamentary deputy of the German Ministry of Justice Rheiner Funke [title as received] and told him that the two countries had never had any problem in their mutual relations.

The German official who is also chairman of the Irano-German Friendship Association said the association had been very instrumental in building the relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, members of the association also separately met with Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran for Euro-American Affairs, Mahmoud Va'ezi, Monday and reviewed prospects for broadening relations between the two countries.

Va'ezi expressed hope that the association would help bring closer together the peopeles of Iran and Germany.

States Eagerness for 'Friendly' Relations

LD2405085995 Tehran IRNA in English 0519 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 24, IRNA — A top German official asserted his convention [as received] that Iran is a powerful country which creates stability in the region.

The German parliamentary state secretary at the federal Ministry of Justice and member of the Bundestag, Rainer Funke, in his recent visit to Iran told the English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' that he opposed the American imposed embargo and believed that "dialogues were more effective."

He arrived here at the head of an Iran-Germany Friendship Association [delegation] and during his stay met with officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, justice, interior as well as economics and finance.

According to the German official, the talks indicated the two countries' interest in cementing bilateral relations.

Pointing out that Iran is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), he refuted U.S. allegations that nuclear technology sold to Iran is a threat to peace.

He reiterated that "plants placed at the disposal of Iran are not capable of producing atomic weapons."

As a member of German Government, he said he was eager to have "friendly relations" with Iran and stated that Germany had long had a policy to cooperate with Iran and had always strived to resolve any misunderstanding through communication.

Violence in Algeria, Western Support Viewed

NC2405061995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 24 May 95

[Commentary by the News Commentary and Research Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Incoming reports from Algeria show that the repression of the people by the ruling military regime continues in full force and that no perceptible changes have been seen to show that the violence is dying down. According to these reports, during the past week dozens of people were killed in clashes with the military regime's forces.

Of course because of the heavy news censorship on developments in Algeria, the precise number of casualties is not known. But based on figures published by some Western groups that put the casualty toll at more than 40,000, in the 28-month Algerian crisis, one can assume that during this period, the average number of people killed by the coupist regime has been 32 per day.

Meanwhile, the influential Western countries, which have generously supported the Algerian military regime since the coup and the cancellation of the election results in the winter of 1991, continue this policy despite their slogans supporting the return of democracy to the country. Yesterday, it was announced that the IMF

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has extended a $1.8-billion loan to the Algerian rulers. Although this huge loan is said to have been allocated to help the economic reforms in that country, by bearing in mind the unstable political situation in Algeria and the inability of the ruling regime to manage affairs, one cannot be sure that this huge foreign loan will be used solely for economic purposes.

Many analysts believe that the Western governments' fear of the possible victory of the Muslims in Algeria is actually the major motive behind their political and economic support for the ruling regime. Beside the propaganda angle, such aid is aimed at strengthening the militarists, vis-a-vis a people's uprising.

Chinese Companies Win Contract To Develop Subway

LD2205181195 Tehran IRNA in English 1711 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 22, IRNA — Three Chinese companies won the dlrs. [dollars] 573 million contract for assisting in the completion of Tehran's subway system.

The protocol which consists of three different contracts was agreed in principle between Tehran and Suburbs railway company and three Chinese companies in March and May.

The agreement was finalized on Saturday with the Iranian company and the northern China industries company signing the contract on completion of the 43-kilometer railway connecting Tehran and Karaj.

The two other Chinese companies taking part in the project are the National Company of Technology Imports and Exports and the International Company of Deposits and Investments.

Director-general of Tehran and Suburbs railway company, Asghar Ebrahimi said at the signing ceremony that the contract would be a basis for further expansion of economic ties between Iran and China.

The Iranian side expects that the project would be completed in two years, he said.

The underground railway network which is to serve Tehran's 10 million population by covering most major areas of the capital, is the greatest and the longest subway system in the Middle East.

The three Chinese companies involved in the project are to provide and manufacture the needed equipment and facilities such as wagons, locomotives, the machinery used for guiding trains, and supplying the electricity.

The contract would be the second biggest between Iran and China after Beijing's agreement in principle to the sale of four 325 megawatt China-made nuclear reactors to Iran in March.

North Korean Deputy Interviewed on Relations

LD1705203695 Tehran IRNA in English 1923 GMT 17 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 17, IRNA — The visiting deputy for North Korean Committee of Cultural Relations with the foreign countries, Li Yong Dal Ju, in an interview with IRNA here Wednesday [16 May] said that because of anti-imperialist common stances, Iran and his country have been able to establish good relations in various areas such as in cultural, political and economic fields.

He added that following the visit of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i to North Korea in the year 1989 the relations between the two countries entered into a new phase.

Before the agreement signed between Tehran and Pyongyang in the area of cultural exchange the relations between the two countries were merely economic and political relations, he said.

Saying the late leader of his country was always reminding the authorities to promote the relations with Iran, the North Korean official added that on this account a new agreement is to be signed here Wednesday night between the two countries in the area of cultural exchange.

The North Korean official here Wednesday paid a visit to an exhibition of photographs related to North Korea. The week-long photograph exhibition opened here Sunday at Tehran Azadi museum complex.

Criticizes U.S. Stand on Iran

LD2105110795 Tehran IRNA in English 1011 GMT 21 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 21, IRNA — A high-ranking North Korean official here on Sunday [21 May] condemned the recent U.S. stand adopted against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In a meeting with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'addin Borujerdi, vice chairman of the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations Li Yong Dal Ju described the cultural agreement to be signed between the two countries as a big stride towards expansion of mutual cultural cooperation.

Yong is leading a North Korean delegation to Tehran to attend Tehran-Pyongyang friendship week and sign a cultural agreement.

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During the talks the two sides also stressed expansion of mutual relations.

Daily Condemns U.S. 'Bullying' of North Korea

LD2305085595 Tehran IRNA in English 0803 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 23, IRNA — A morning daily Monday [22 May] commented on Washington's apparent determination to force Pyongyang surrender to its plans on nuclear technology and said North Korea is no less resolute not to surrender to the bullying of the United States.

The daily in its editorial wrote that the Clinton administration has resorted to the carrot and stick policy. "On the one hand, Pyongyang has been told that it would be given a package of four billion dollars in aid for reshaping its nuclear program, on the other, Washington has turned to intimidation and blackmail."

The article further said, "The irrational U.S. approach towards this critical issue caused a deadlock in the first round of talks Monday. The Koreans entered the game with full sincerity, therefore, they expected the American side to show sincerity as well. However, as the first round of talks was going on, the Koreans realized the insincerity of the U.S. It was but natural for them to stand firm on their stance. The U.S. bullying has, in fact, dealt a strong blow to the whole process."

"If the Clinton administration is really interested in a rational dialogue with the North Korean officials, it should advise Thomas Hubbard, the U.S. negotiator in Kuala Lumpur, to respect the North Korean national pride and security concerns."

First Phase of 'Dawn-4' Army Exercise Begins

LD2205113795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of 24 May, the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr [from Iraqi occupation in 1982], the first phase of the Dawn-4 [Fajr-4] maneuver was carried out today in the operational area of Beyt ol-Moqaddas:

[Unidentified correspondent] At the beginning of this phase, the hypothetical enemy breaches the defense lines of the forces of Islam. The breach is repaired in view of the complete vigilance of the brave fighters of Islam, preventing the entry of the hypothetical enemy.

After these operations, infantry units from the Ground Forces of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps [IRGC] rushed the positions of the hypothetical enemy with artillery support from the Vali-ye Asr Division 7 and with the assistance of the army's Ranger Brigade 45, driving back the enemy's forces and occupying the captured terrain.

Also during this phase, the swift flying forces of the Army's Havaniruz [air units of the Army's Ground Forces] carried out several flyovers, bombing the positions of the hypothetical enemy.

Real fire and new weaponry are being used in this maneuver which is being carried out jointly by the Ground Forces of the Army and the IRGC.

The Dawn-4 maneuver is being carried out in the south of the country with the aim of commemorating the sacrifices made by the combatants of Islam during the Beyt ol-Moqaddas operations which led to the liberation of heroic Khorramshahr and toward increasing combat capabilities, using new weaponry and maintaining the combat readiness of the forces of Islam to defend the country's borders. The second and third phases of this maneuver will be carried out tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

This is the Central News Unit, Ahvaz.

Second Phase Begins

LD2305125995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of the 13th anniversary of liberation of Khorramshahr, and in order to increase the combat and defense capability of the armed forces, the second phase of the Dawn-4 maneuvers began this morning in the Beyt ol-Moqaddas operational area near the Iraqi border, using modern and advanced weapons.

This phase of the maneuvers began with the holy codename of O 'Ali, son of Abitaleb, peace be upon him, and was attended by Sardar Safavi, deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps [IRGC].

The participating units of the army and the IRGC were the 7th Armored Division of the Lord of the Era, the Hidden Imam; the 45th Commando Brigade; and the airborne division of the ground forces.

First, the positions of a hypothetical enemy were pounded by heavy artillery fire and an offensive was repulsed. Afterwards the armored, mechanized, and infantry units launched a lightning attack on the positions and fortifications of the hypothetical enemy. The active personnel were also covered by antitank units, the units responsible for countering chemical attacks, ground-to-air antiaircraft fire, and helicopters of the IRGC and the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic

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of Iran. After forcing the hypothetical enemy to retreat from his positions and fortifications, the warriors of Islam captured and consolidated these positions.

The third and final phase of the Dawn-4 maneuvers will begin early tomorrow morning, Wednesday. The forces of Islam will advance toward Khorramshahr from three directions.

'Dawn-17' Maneuvers Continue for Second Day

LD2205151395 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1215 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The first phase of the Dawn-17 maneuvers began yesterday in the vicinity of Qom with the participation of units from the ground forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran's army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps [IRGC] .

During this phase, the operational units carried out their exercises in an area of 300 [figure as heard] square kms, using heavy and light weaponry.

According to the commander of the army's ground force, Zolfaqar tanks, Kobra armored personnel carriers, and new electronic weapons are being used for the first time in these maneuvers. He said: The most important feature of these maneuvers is that the participating forces are using military ammunition [as heard], which is almost unheard of in the case of other armies of the world.

In addition to this, today, the second day of the Dawn-17 maneuvers, the units deployed along the operational axes prepared themselves for night attack operations after receiving their latest orders, completing their combat formations, replenishing their supplies, and carrying out the required preparations.

Military Exercises Continue in Khuzestan Province

LD2205190795 Tehran IRNA in English 1805 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 22, IRNA — The 'Fajr' military maneuvres continued in the 'Beit al-Moqaddas' area, Khuzestan Province, today.

Brigadier General of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Mohammad 'Ali Ja'fari said the Vali Asr armoured division of the Basij (volunteer forces) and a brigade of the Armed Forces and Havanirouz (air support for ground force) are involved in the war games that is going to continue until Wednesday.

About 15,000 personnel are participating in the operations that also uses modern army tanks.

The purpose of the operations is to test the combat readiness of the Iranian forces.

The operation coincides with the 13th anniversary of the heroic liberation of the port city of Khorramshahr from Ba'thist occupation in an operations code-named 'Beit-al-Moqadda'.

The epic victory on May 24, 1982, was the climax to a string of successful operations by Iran's Islamic combatants that turned the tide of the war against the Iraqi aggressor.

Rafsanjani Speaks at Khorramshahr Libertion Ceremony

LD2305180495 Tehran IRNA in English 1735 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, May 23, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said here on Tuesday [23 May] liberating Khorramshahr was a triumph for a nation then suffering from loneliness and adversity in the face of eastern and western forces.

Speaking in a ceremony to mark the anniversary of liberating Iranian city of Khorramshahr on May 24, 1982, President Rafsanjani said recapturing Khorramshahr was such a shock that the eastern and western media supporting the Baathist regime of Baghdad did not carry the news on the defeat of Iraqi forces until 24 hours later.

He said liberating Khorramshahr was a historical, heroic and everlasting glory.

In reference to Iranian combatants who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the Islamic revolution, Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani said, "presence of such sacrificers and supporters of the Islamic revolution has led the U.S. to see Iran a nightmare and resort to illogical attempts in desperation against the Islamic revolution."

President awarded the first class certificate of sacrifice to 11 mothers of the martyrs and one war veteran. He also awarded seven elite authors of the books written on the theme of the sacred defence (Iraqi-imposed war, 1980-1988).

'Falaq-3' Missile Maneuvers Begin in Hormuz Strait

LD2305175995 Tehran IRNA in English 1653 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bandar e-Abbas (Hormuzgan), May 23, IRNA — 'Falaq-3' five-day missile manoeuvre was launched at Hormuz Strait in Persian Gulf water south of Iran on Monday [22 May] jointly by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Islamic Republic Army.

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At the first day of the manoeuvre IRGC and Army forces managed to transpose their missile equipments.

Nepal

Adhikari: Democracy Depends on Budget Approval

BK2205021595 Hong Kong AFP in English 0147 GMT 22 May 95

[By Kedar Man Singh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, May 22 (AFP)— Nepalese Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari says he is certain parliament will approve the government's budget in the July session, seen here as a vote of confidence as a formerly supportive party wavers.

The budget, which emphasizes development in villages, must garner support from the Nepali Congress or the royalist Rastriya Prajatantra Party in parliament in order to pass. Adhikari's party, the Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) group, came to power with the backing of the Nepali Congress, a proponent of democracy, whose support for the communists has since grown tenuous.

Adhikari said the survival of Nepal's democracy depends on approval of the budget. Should the budget not pass, parliament would have to be dissolved and the country would have to go to the polls for the third time since the establishment of democracy in 1990 — an expensive and disrupting procedure for a country which saw its last poll only six months ago.

A royal ordinance from the king, however, could be used to approve the budget and prevent the government from falling.

In an interview with AFP on Sunday [21 May], Adhikari said his government has two priorities. The political priority is to pass a law instituting punishment for human-rights violators and compensation for the victims.

"On the economic front, we want to reform the agricultural sector. We have constituted a commission which is enquiring about its structure and will submit a report, and then we will introduce land reforms," he said.

"We will use our energy and resources for development of villages because we know unless there is a breakthrough in village life, we will have no infrastructure, so I hope and am also confident that the budget will be accepted by all," he said.

Nearly 90 percent of Nepal's population are farmers or depend on farmlands for their livelihood. Modern agricultural techniques are nearly nonexistent.

The prime minister also said his government will push for laws to protect workers, including creation of a labour court.

"Unless we bring labour and capital into a harmonious situation, nothing will work well. From this point of view particularly, we will adopt a law which will provide property rights to all," he said.

The budget will not differ much from past budgets, as the government cannot totally ignore the past, but the thrust of the budget will be village development, he said.

Adhikari warned that if the other parties block passage of the budget, "I will go to the king to ask him to pass it by royal ordinance." He said that opposition members of parliament had previously made such a request about another matter.

Asked his view on Nepal's monarchy, Adhikari said: "I am, of course, a communist, but I know this institution is needed for some time to come."

"The co-existence of communists and the monarchy is very normal in our country," he said, adding that the "Nepalese monarchy is the symbol of unity in Nepal."

According to the constitution, if the government falls, the country automatically holds mid-term polls, he said. But a royal ordinance would prevent this.

Adhikari also said the Bhutanese and the non-Bhutanese among the more than 100,000 refugees sheltering in far southeastern Nepal should be identified and the genuine Bhutanese repatriated.

The Bhutanese fled to Nepal after their government introduced harsh cultural reforms and threatened those who disobeyed with severe punishment.

But Bhutan says both countries should set up a team to identify who is who among the refugees, he said.

"The past government made some mistakes by accepting some criteria so we are in a difficult position now and if we now break the dialogue, things will worsen," he said.

"So we will continue our dialogue but in the meantime I am trying to persuade donor countries that when they take an interest in helping Bhutan, they should also take an interest in helping the Bhutanese refugees," he said.

Police Arrest Karnali Liberation Front Members

BK2205135295 Hong Kong AFP in English 1341 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, May 22 (AFP) — Police on Monday [22 May] arrested several activists belonging to the Karnali Liberation Front (KLF) in an

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apparent attempt to stop a public meeting by the group, a police source said.

A KLF source claimed that more than 20 of its activists including its convenor B. P. Nepali had been arrested in the past 24 hours, while a home ministry spokesman confirmed the arrest of only a few KLF members including its spokesman Prem Kaidi.

The KLF had planned the public meeting Tuesday to call for the return of Nepalese land lost to India under the Nepal-British Sugauli Treaty of 1816.

"As per article eight of the Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty signed in 1950, all agreements and treaties signed before this one (the 1950 treaty) are cancelled," Kaidi, who is also a journalist, said earlier.

The Sugauli Treaty was signed between Nepal and the then British rulers of India following the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-1816) and stripped Nepal of one-third of its territory as well as forcing it to accept a permanent British Resident in Kathmandu.

The KLF is also demanding that the government grant autonomy to the Karnali Zone in the northwest in which some 300,000 people live.

The KLF, formed last year by people living in the zone, is widely backed by the zone's population and is believed to have the support of a potentially violent hardcore of several thousand.

Home ministry spokesman Keshav Raj Rajbhandari said the KLF as an unrecognized body because none of its office-bearers had so far registered with the ministry.

He also warned that "any attempt to disturb or hinder our relations with our neighbours will not be tolerated.

'Elaborate Security' Deployed To Prevent KLF Meeting

BK2305133395 Hong Kong AFP in English 1326 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, May 23 (AFP) — Nepal's communist government deployed elaborate security Tuesday [23 May] to prevent a planned public meeting of the Karnali Liberation Front (KLF) which is demanding greater autonomy for a zone in the country's northwest.

The KLF, formed last year, is also demanding "the return of one-third of Nepal's territory lost to India under the March 1816 Nepal-British Sugauli treaty."

"We will not allow any kind of political activities in Nepal against our neighbouring countries," Nepalese Home Ministry spokesman Keshav Raj Rajbhandari told AFP.

The KLF meeting was supported by the leader of the India-based Gurkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), Subash Ghising, who failed to arrive here Tuesday, airport security sources said.

GNLF has been demanding autonomy for a region in the north of India's West Bengal state, adjoining Nepal.

Police vans and more than a dozen policemen were waiting to whisk Ghising away in case he arrived to address the KLF meeting, the police source added.

Some 300 (?GNLF) activists managed to sneak into Kathmandu to attend the meeting but were rounded up and sent back to India, a police source said.

Strict vigilance was enforced along the southern border, adjoining Indian states of West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in order to prevent Ghising and his activists from entering Nepal, the police source said.

The Chief District [word indistinct] said KLF's request to hold the meeting was rejected on grounds that it might spark communal violence in the country.

A KLF source on Monday claimed that more than 20 of its activists including its convenor B.P. Nepali were arrested but the Home Ministry spokesman said "only a few" KLF members including its spokesman Prem Kaidi were detained.

The Home Ministry spokesman earlier described the KLF as an unrecognized body. It is the first group to raise the demand for autonomy in Nepal.

Pakistan

Religious Leader Threatens To 'Target' Americans

BK2405085895 Lahore JANG in Urdu 23 May 95 pp 8, 4

[Report by JANG news bureau]

[FBIS Translated Text] Islamabad — Allama Murid Abbas Yazdani, chief of the Sipah-i-Mohammad Pakistan has threatened to target Americans in Pakistan if the United States attacks Iran. He said that a force of 500,000 youths has been set up to protect Kashmir and other Islamic countries and their training has started. Our youths will give a crushing reply to Indian atrocities in Kashmir. We will send our youths on a jihad wherever the Muslims need them. Yazdani was addressing a press conference here on 22 May, which was also attended by Allama Sabtain Shirazi, secretary general of Sipah- i-Mohammad; and Raja Abid, the organization's vice president for Punjab.

Allama Yazdani termed the setting up of the National Integration Council [NIC] as a concrete step toward

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forging sectarian amity and said that we have pledged to put the secondary issues on the back burner and to forge unity for the sake of the greater Islamic interests. Our opponents have also realized that sectarianism will yield nothing. He said that all religious organizations and parties have signed the NIC's 17-point code of conduct according to which anyone blaspheming Imam Mehdi or terming any Islamic school of thought as non-Islamic will be treated as if he has abandoned Islam.

Allama Yazdani said that we will root out sectarianism with the help of the NIC. Peace will now be maintained even during the month of Muharram and everyone will be allowed to perform prayer according to his faith. Processions and religious meetings will be allowed to be held freely. We will not seek the government's permission for any procession or religious meetings because this is something which relates to our prayers and it is our right. We respect the prophet's companions; we did not do anything disrespectful to them nor are we going to do so in future.

Allama Yazdani said that a high-level reconciliatory board under the chairmanship of Qazi Hussain Ahmad has been set up by the NIC. Among other responsibilities, the board has also been entrusted with the task of hearing complaints and making decisions on them. The board members include Allama Sajid Naqvi, Ziaur Rahman Farooqi, Maulana Abdus Sattar Niazi, Professor Sajid Mir, Agha Murataza Pooya and myself. He said that no step will be taken by the NIC to pardon Maulana Azam Tariq or to protect him; he should surrender himself to the law and face the legal process just as we do, he added.

Allama Yazdani said that the Sipah-i-Mohammad will wholeheartedly observe the 27 May strike against amending the blasphemy law. He said that we will not allow the U.S. new world order to be implemented and will strongly resist it. The government too should resist the U.S. interference in national affairs. Yazdani said that attempts were made to assassinate him with a bomb during his detention at Banni police station. However, the local administration attributed the bomb blast to our workers. He demanded the release of all workers and officials of his organization and the withdrawal of cases against them.

Spokesman Denies Reports of Nuclear Ties With Iran

BK1905105795 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 19 May 95 pp 1, 2

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Pakistan has denied having any secret cooperation with Iran in nuclear technology.

Commenting on an article published in the WASHINGTON POST, the foreign office spokesman on Thursday [18 May] said Pakistan had never had any clandestine cooperation with its neighbour in the field of nuclear technology. "We had been cooperating with Iran just like with any other country under the aegis of International Atomic Agency for the peaceful uses of Nuclear Technology", said the spokesman while briefing newsmen.

The WASHINGTON POST few days back carried an article, alleging that when General Beg was COAS [Chief of Army Staff] Pakistan extended some assistance to Iran in the field of nuclear technology. But after Bhutto assumed power, such links between Iran and Pakistan have been severed. The spokesman was asked by an American journalist to comment on the article published in the WASHINGTON POST. However, the spokesman said there was no truth in the report.

The spokesman uttered a very meek "no" in response to a question whether the American administration had asked Pakistan to follow the trade sanctions imposed by President Clinton on Iran. "I am not sure but let me check it", said the spokesman.

The spokesman announced that Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto would embark on a two days official visit to Uzbekistan from May 22. During her visit, she would meet Uzbek President Islam Karimov and Prime Minister Abdulhashim Mutalov. She would hold talks on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. "This would provide an opportunity to both sides to better understanding the regional issues", said the spokesman.

He said three documents for the cooperation in the field of science and technology, tourism and avoidance of double taxation would be signed during the visit.

The prime minister would visit Samarkand and Bokhara and the former would be twined with Lahore. She would also offer fateha [prayers] at the shrine of Imam Bokhari.

President of Uzbekistan visited Pakistan in 1992.

Replying to a query regarding the prospects of war in the wake of Indian threats, the spokesman said the Indian minister had been holding out war threats, violations of Line of Control had escalated and there were reports of troops movements and concentration along the borders. "But we are prepared", "said the spokesman and added that Pakistan thought that these war threats were also reflection of domestic politics of India.

However, the spokesman said Pakistan leadership wanted to keep the public opinion cool in the country.

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The spokesman said Pakistan had taken a strong exception to the statement of Indian minister for external affairs that India had evidence to proof that Pakistan was providing funds to Kashmiri freedom fighters using drug money. He said Indian deputy external affairs minister, Salman Khurshid had also asserted in his interview with the video magazine EYEWITNESS that India had proves that Pakistan was involved in the desecration of Charar Sharif shrine. "Nothing but concocted evidence was possible" said the spokesman.

He said these allegations were a crude Indian move to deflect the strong criticism India was facing throughout the world.

He said, Indian troops desecrated the shrine on the pretext of flushing out freedom fighters. Indian government have not been able to justify the use of such a big force to flush out what was a handful of militants.

He said the Kashmiris had already rejected India charges and testified that desecration of the holy shrine was a planned move. However, they cannot break the will of the people through such actions, said the spokesman.

Commenting on Indian prime minister's repeated assertion that Kashmir was an internal matter of India, the spokesman said the Simla Agreement, which was much trumpeted by India, recognised the existence of Kashmir dispute between the two countries.

The spokesman appreciated the statement of Russian president, calling for a round table conference on the issue of Chechnya. The spokesman said Chechna military commander had also expressed willingness for talks to end conflict. He said Pakistan had always said the conflict should be resolved through talks.

Editorial Considers Trade Agreements With Iran

BK2105104395 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 20 May 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Pak-Iran economic ties"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Adviser to Prime Minister on Economic Affairs, V.A. Jaffery and visiting Iranian Minister for Roads and Transport Akbar Torkan signed two agreements at the conclusion of the two-day Pak-Iran Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) talks. One agreement related to promotion of maritime trade between the two countries, while the other was a general agreement on different decisions taken at the meeting of the JMC. There is a great potential for closer Pak-Iran cooperation in the economic field. The bilateral economic ties have been institutionalised in the form of Pak-Iran JMC which was established in 1986 to provide a framework for promoting economic, commercial and cultural cooperation. The two countries are also founding members of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) which provides for multilateral inter-action in the economic field.

The volume of Pak-Iran trade has been fluctuating in the last few years. Pakistan had enjoyed a favourable balance of trade right up to 1984-85, but since then it has been experiencing an adverse swing. In 1992-93 Pakistan's exports to Iran were valued at Rs. [Pakistani rupees] 1,130 million while the imports from that country totalled Rs. 4,601 million. The figures for July-March 1993-94 were Rs. 250 million and Rs. 2,910 million respectively. The major items exported to Iran by Pakistan have been rice, refined sugar, leather and leather products, cotton fabrics and tents. Pakistan's imports from Iran are mainly petroleum, fruit and sulphur. The volume of trade is not commensurate with the inherent potential of the two countries and new items of trade require to be explored. The maritime trade agreement, signed by the two sides following the JMC meeting, would therefore go a long way in boosting trade between the two countries. The two sides agreed to rectify the imbalance in bilateral trade by its diversification and expansion. Talking to the visiting Iranian Minister for Roads and Transport, President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari said it was very important to develop and extend all the means of communication on land or through sea between Iran and Pakistan to integrate the two economies to enable them to benefit from bilateral trade as well as from trade with Central Asian republics and other countries in the region. The Iranian Minister reciprocated the sentiments by observing that he had specially come to Pakistan to personally attend the meeting of JMC in order to accelerate the pace of cooperation between the two countries. As regards the joint ventures, while Pakistan can help Iran in setting up sugar and cement plants, the latter can provide invaluable assistance to Pakistan in establishing oil refineries. Iran has already allocated resources for the Pak-Iran refinery project and work on it will start soon.

Indian Envoy Summoned Over 'Bellicose' Statements

BK2305142295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian deputy high commissioner was summoned to the Foreign Office today and informed that Pakistan rejects India's protests and allegations of involvement in the desecration and destruction of the holy town of Charar Sharif, which resulted in the burning of the shrine of Hazrat Nuruddin Wali, mosque, and madrasa [religious school].

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The Indian diplomat was informed that Pakistan has noted with concern the bellicose and provocative statements being made by responsible ministers of the Government of India. The threats of war and of military action against Pakistan violate the spirit of the Simla Agreement and militate against principles of good neighborliness and have aggravated the security situation in the region.

Further on 'Threatening' Remarks

BK2305162095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Indian deputy high commissioner was summoned to the Foreign Office today and informed that Pakistan rejects India's protests and all allegations of involvement in the destruction of Charar Sharif town and burning, desecrating, and martyring the shrine of Hazrat Nuruddin Wali and the adjacent mosque and religious school.

The Indian diplomat was informed that Pakistan has taken serious note of the threatening and provocative statements made by responsible ministers of the Indian government. The threats of war and of military action against Pakistan violate the spirit of the Simla agreement and the principles of good neighborliness and have vitiated the security situation in the region. Pakistan also rejects the allegations made by the responsible leaders of the Indian Government that Islamabad is providing material help to the freedom fighters or supporting them in the areas controlled by India in Jammu and Kashmir.

Facts have been deliberately distorted by these sorts of allegations in connection with the assault of Indian troops on the Charar Sharif town and Pakistan has taken serious note of it. The truth of Indian military action has come out through reports from independent sources and eyewitnesses. It has been proved that Indian troops damaged and set to fire to the houses of innocent civilians and martyred the shrine of Sheikh Nuruddin Wali under a premeditated plan.

The Indian deputy high commissioner was told that the Indian authorities cannot rid themselves of the responsibility for this action and nor can they put the blame on somebody else.

Reportage, Views of Bhutto's Uzbekistan Visit

Departs for Two Day Trip

BK2205060295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 22 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto left Islamabad for Tashkent this morning on a two-day visit to Uzbekistan. The prime minister is accompanied by, among others, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, MNA [Member of National Assembly]; Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali; Commerce Minister Chaudhary Ahmad Mukhtar; Interior Minister retired Major General Nasirullah Khan Babar; and Special Assistant on Economic Affairs Mr. Shahid Hassan Khan. Formal talks between President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov and the prime minister will be held this afternoon. Later, the two countries are expected to sign agreements for cooperation in different fields.

Returns 'Completely Satisfied'

BK2405031495 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto returned to Islamabad last night after a two-day official visit to Uzbekistan. Earlier, she was seen off by Uzbek President Islam Karimov when she left Samarkand. Uzbek cabinet members and senior officers were also present at the airport to bid farewell to the prime minister. Talking to newsmen before boarding, Benazir Bhutto said that she is completely satisfied with her visit to Uzbekistan. She said that the two countries hold identical views on the regional situation, the Kashmir issue, and the civil wars of Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The prime minister said that impressed by the utility of the Silk Route, the two countries have expressed the desire to establish maximum contacts through road and railways. The two countries also signed three agreements, including the one on avoidance of double taxation. She said that within a short period of three years, the two countries not only established their embassies in each other's capitals, but have also started air service between them. [passage omitted]

Lahore and Samarkand were declared twin cities at a simple ceremony in Samarkand yesterday. The administrator of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation and mayor of Samarkand signed documents in this regard in the presence of Uzbek President Karimov and Prime Minister Bhutto. Talking to Radio Pakistan's special correspondent, Zulfiqar Ali Jafri, the governor of Samarkand, said that Prime Minister Bhutto's visit to Uzbekistan will boost the friendly ties between the two countries which have to play important roles in the comity of nations.

Editorial Views Economic Ties

BK2205075795 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 22 May 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Pak-Uzbek economic ties"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's visit to Uzbekistan is meant essential to boost

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economic ties between the two countries. [sentence as published] Since Uzbek President Islam Karimov visited Pakistan in 1992, trade between them plummeted from 7.5 million dollars in 1993 to 800,000 dollars last year. Uzbekistan trade with the rest of the world amounts to one billion dollars a year. The instability in Afghanistan and Tajkistan are hampering two-way trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Islamabad and Tashkent are keen to stablilise the region in their joint economic efforts. Several road projects have already been initiated to avoid the areas worst affected by the conflict.

Uzbekistan is one of the six Central Asian Republics which became independent after the break-up of the USSR. It has a population of 20 million, 70 percent of whom are Muslims. It is endowed with a plenty of natural resources, agricultural wealth and industrial potential. Its mineral resources include oil, coal copper and gold. Its agriculture sector comprised intensive farming with artificial irrigation. It accounted for 67 percent of the agriculture sector comprises intensive farming with artificial irrigation. It accounted for 67 percent of the agricultural produce in the USSR and its share was 60 percent in the total Soviet gold production. With a 100 percent literacy rate and ideal infrastructure of road and railway networks, Uzbekistan can make an effective industrial breakthrough. Even at present it is reputed for its iron and steel industries. Isolated form the outside world for decades under the communist rule, the Republic is learning the skills of conducting foreign relations and economic cooperation in the form of trade and joint ventures. Pakistani garments were always very popular in the former Soviet Union and their export to Uzbekistan can be significantly increased by holding exhibitions there. Pak-Uzbekistan Traders Welfare and Friendship Society has already been formed to promote relations between traders of the two countries. During Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's visit, a number of agreements are to be signed on commercial, scientific and tourist cooperation. Uzbekistan is a cotton-producing country and Pakistan has already developed its textile industry. Joint ventures in the textile sector can be a practical proposition. Our Muslim culture is a synthesis of different elements of different nations. This made us powerful in the past and needs to be reviewed now. The visit of the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan going to facilitate its achievement.

Visit Called 'Fruitful' Exercise

BK2405070895 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 24 May 95 p 7

[Editorial: "A friend in Central Asia"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's visit to Uzbekistan may not have been a big media event, but it was a fruitful diplomatic exercise. Its benefits extend beyond the many useful agreements it yielded in the fields of trade, communication, science and technology. Uzbekistan is an important republic of the Central Asian region which, after the fall of the Soviet Union, assumed tremendous geo-strategic value, apart from being a big potential market for foreign investors and businessmen.

Pakistan's earlier efforts to acquire a toehold in the area have not been all that successful. This is specially true in the case of Uzbekistan, with which successive Pakistani governments have had cordial ties, but none fully tapped the potential of the relationship to the benefit of both. Former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif visited the state, and though there was much talk of building strong bridges of friendship and many accords were signed on paper, the lack of follow-up action rendered the effort fruitless.

This seems to be changing now, and a more serious and comprehensive approach is being evolved. The evidence of this lies in the deeper and wider cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Work has been done in spheres such as culture, tourism, joint industrial projects, telecommunications, port and shipping identified by the joint ministerial commission as far back as 1993. There are also enormous opportunities for both to come together in the field of cotton, its marketing and production. The private sector of the two countries can be of great help in furthering the trade and other relations between the two countries. There is also need to open new avenues of communications, or to properly and fully exploit the existing ones, something last year's agreement to utilise the Samarkhand-Karachi route for transit trade.

Equally important is to ensure that the regional tumults do not cast an ugly shadow on the relations between the two states. Uzbek President Islam Karimov has made his stand on Kashmir clear by setting the record straight with the statement that the Indian newspapers distorted his views on the issue. Similar understanding needs to be reached on Afghanistan, whose geographical stretch divides the two countries. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's statement that the Afghans should solve their problems themselves, should be re-assuring to the

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Uzbek government, which in the past had some doubts about Islamabad's role in the war-ravaged country.

No less significant from Pakistan's point of view, is to make use of Uzbekistan government's goodwill to cultivate a favourable image for itself among the Uzbeks. Pakistani visitors who are going to Uzbekistan in droves need to bear this in mind because many of them are found indulging in activities that bring a bad name to this country. This is a discouraging trend especially when we have underlined economic cooperation with Uzbekistan to be the cornerstone of our friendship. Not many Uzbeks will be willing to do business with Pakistanis if their experience with us as a people is not pleasant.

Reportage on Bhutto Visit to Uzbekistan

WA2405160095

For further reportage on the visit by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to Uzbekistan, including official reports on her activities and talks with Uzbek officials, please see the Uzbekistan section of the 23 May issue of the Central Eurasia DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Sri Lanka

President Addresses LTTE, 'Peace Efforts'

BK2305112795 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government is planning a clear political and military action required to face the current situation. We have an Army with more strength than the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. The government had deployed the forces for attack with a direct, clean plan if the LTTE was to continue the attacks.

This was stated by President Chandrika Kumaratunga when she addressed the nation over TV last night. The armed forces faced a setback in the first two weeks of the initial attack. However, the president said that they were now successfully facing these attacks. Although we acted to achieve peace through peaceful means, the LTTE has called us to the battle front.

She stressed that the government would not hesitate to achieve peace through any means if it was not possible to establish peace by peaceful means. This attack is not at all against the Tamil people. We are today fighting for the entire population of the country that expects a political solution and against those who oppose peace. Although difficulties arise in providing essential items to the ordinary Tamil people under the present situation, every possible measures will be taken to avoid it. Government will do its best to minimize human rights violation. Measures have already been taken to appoint a committee comprising representatives of Tamil political parties and judges for this purpose.

Explaining at length the peace efforts of the government, President Kumaratunga said that these efforts had come in for praise by the international community. The unilateral action by the LTTE has been condemned not only by neighboring countries, but also by the Western nations and the Arab world. In addition, these countries have expressed willingness to provide aid in various forms to face this situation.

Pointing out that discussions had already begun with all parties on a political package, she said that after seeking their views it would be presented to the people. It would devolve power widely and will be based on justice. The government is ready to bring these things into the Constitution.

Civilians Flee Villages in Fear of Fighting

BK2405122295 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Defying LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] orders, civilians in large numbers are leaving villages in the Vadamarachchi area, where a large Tiger buildup has taken place. Well informed sources said that a very large number of civilians have left their homes in coastal villages between Point Pedro and Vadamarachchi, as they feared intense fighting in these areas due to the LTTE buildup.

The approaching eighth anniversary of Operation Vadamarachchi which began on 29 May 1987 is another reason for civilian apprehension. People are afraid that the LTTE may attempt to commemorate the anniversary by launching an attack. Military intelligence confirmed civilian evacuation of these areas. Operation Vadamarachchi was led by the late General Denzil Kobbekaduwa during the time the late Lalit Athulathmudali was minister of national security.

Defense sources said that the LTTE is not happy about the civilian exodus. The people were leaving the area because they feared getting caught in crossfire. The Tigers want a human shield and they are trying to make people stay back in their homes, one source said. The Tiger radio has been warning residents of a drastic consequence if they leave their homes but people are taking shelter in kovils [temples], churches, and schools far away from the area they feared will be a battleground. The forward defense lines have been

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reinforced with troops in readiness for a decisive strike, military sources said.

Reportage on Army Ambush of 'Terrorists'

BK2405114795 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops in a long route-clearing patrol yesterday were confronted by a large group of terrorists at (Panchangkerni) near (Wakkai). One officer and 26 soldiers were killed in action while five were wounded. Five bodies of terrorists were also recovered from the scene of the incident. The soldiers had seen a few boats carrying terrorist casualties travelling northwards. The soldiers fought back, inflicting heavy casualty. The number of terrorists who died are estimated to be around 20.

Reportage Continues on Visit by Australian Minister

Indian Ocean Community Discussed

BK2305121195 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 23 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian Ocean rim proposal will envisage a multifaceted approach covering economic, security, and social issues. It will bring together three main groups of participants — namely the business community, the research and academic community, and government officials in their personal capacity — to work toward exploring possibility of further cooperation among Indian Ocean countries. So said the visiting minister of foreign affairs of Australia, Senator Gareth Evans, when he called on his Sri Lankan counterpart, Lakshman Kadirgamar, yesterday at the Foreign Ministry office in Colombo.

Minister Evans stated that the primary purpose of his visit was to brief the Government of Sri Lanka on the Indian Ocean community initiatives at the forthcoming international forum on the Indian Ocean region which will be hosted by Australia in Perth next month. The Australian foreign minister expressed the keenness of his government on Sri Lanka's participation at the forthcoming Perth conference in view of Sri Lanka's pioneering role in promoting the Indian Ocean peace zone and Indian Ocean Maritime Affairs Corporation, which contributed to the peaceful uses of the Indian Ocean.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar outlined the initiatives taken by Sri Lanka on the Indian Ocean peace zone and Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Corporation. He stated that Sri Lanka, as chairman of the Indian Ocean Ad Hoc Committee of the UN, was in the process of examining ways and means for the expansion of the mandate of the committee, in particular for the inclusion of economic cooperation and other confidence building measures which will promote security in Indian Ocean region.

The two ministers also discussed the current developments in Sri Lanka, especially in the context of the northeast crisis. The Australian foreign minister regretted the fact that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has broken off the dialogue without any justification.

Ethnic, Constitutional Issues Viewed

BK2405114895 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 May 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Australian Foreign Minister Senator Gareth Evans called on Professor G.L. Peiris, minister of justice and constitutional affairs, and deputy minister of finance at the Finance Ministry. Official sources said their discussions centered on the ethnic question and the proposed constitutional reforms. Subsequently, the ministers held a roundtable conference on these topics.

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